

LECTURES
ON EGYPTIAN
ART



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LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART

by JEAN CAPART

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LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART

by JEAN CAPART

Conservateur en chef des Musées Royaux du Cinquantième,
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TO MY GOOD COLLABORATOR

Miss MARIE PAUL

AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FOR HER EXCELLENT WORK

IN BELGIUM DURING MY AMERICAN TRIP

AND TO MY FRIEND

WALLACE E. CALDWELL

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

AS A KIND REMEMBRANCE OF MANY PLEASANT DAYS

IN BRUSSELS AND AT CHAPEL HILL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Primitive Art in Egypt. Philadelphia, 1905.

Egyptian Art. Introductory Studies. London, 1923

The Tomb of Tutankhamen. London, 1923.

Thebes. The Glory of a Great Past, in collaboration with Miss M. WERBROUCK. New York, 1926.

PREFACE

IN the early years of the 19th century were published the results of the investigations made by the scholars and scientists who had accompanied to Egypt the French military expedition of 1798-1801. The appearance of these sumptuous volumes with plates in color gave a new impulse to interest in the ancient Egyptians and their civilization and this interest was tremendously increased when Champollion in 1822 gave to the world his epoch-making discoveries of the phonetic values of the hieroglyphs and the nature of the ancient Egyptian language, thus opening for his successors the way to the understanding of thousands of inscriptions already long known and thousands which were later to be discovered. For more than a century an ever-growing stream of Egyptian antiquities has found its way to Europe and to America, the number of both popular and learned books and articles on matters relating to ancient Egypt has increased enormously, and within the last thirty or forty years many thousands of Europeans and Americans have journeyed to the banks of the Nile to see for themselves the wonders of which they have read.

Nevertheless, the position of Egypt in human history is scarcely recognized even now by the average educated person. The idea that everything began with Greece is still far too prevalent and there is little realization of the fact that Egypt had possessed a high degree of civilization

PREFACE

for three thousand years before the "Golden Age" of Greece began and that after two thousand years of Egyptian history had elapsed, and the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures were flourishing, the people who a thousand years later were dominating Greece of the Periclean Age had not even acquired the art of writing. There is, however, a growing interest in and appreciation of the bases of modern western civilization and the work of Breasted and others has increased the general knowledge of the debt of the early inhabitants of the eastern Mediterranean islands and the Greek peninsula, and the later Hellenic possessors of those regions, to the far more ancient civilizations of the Nile valley and the Tigris-Euphrates plain.

Egyptian art suffers in the opinion of many intelligent people, because, being different from what one is accustomed to from childhood, it must be studied to be appreciated. Too many people dismiss it with such statements as that "Egyptian work, even of the best period, is stiff and conventional." It is true that there are conventions in Egyptian art, but it is not stiff nor is there any one "best period" ¹, and when given a fair test it cannot fail to hold the interest and enthusiastic admiration of the student.

In these lectures Professor Capart, while necessarily using only a comparatively small number of examples, admirably presents to the student or the general reader a survey of Egyptian art. The reader must not be misled by the modesty of Professor Capart's opening remarks ;

1. The dates which Professor Capart adopts for the Old and Middle Kingdoms of Egypt are not those assumed by many scholars, but the chronology of the Old Kingdom, at least, is still an open question.

PREFACE

for knowledge is a relative matter, and no other scholar has so devoted himself to Egyptian art as has Professor Capart, or has so familiarized himself with surviving examples of it in Egypt itself and in the museums of Europe and America. He has made the subject his own.

The text of the lectures remains as it was originally prepared for delivery to American audiences with little or no alternation.

LUDLOW BULL.

October 14, 1927.

The Metropolitan Museum
New York.

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After an original phot. by JEAN CAPART.

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After an original phot. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

I must acknowledge my debt of gratitude to the authors and publishers for having given permission to reproduce the documents illustrating the Lectures.

FOREWORD

DURING the Winter of 1924-25, I had the great privilege of being invited to the United States, in the capacity of Visiting Professor, by the Commission for Relief in Belgium Educational Foundation Inc. The tour, which lasted from October 18, 1924 to February 25, 1925, had been arranged with the cooperation of the Archæological Institute of America.

For five months I had occasion to travel over the United States in every direction, as will be seen by the list of institutions in which I had the honour of speaking. They are mentioned below in the alphabetical order of the localities at which they are situated :

Baltimore	Maryland	Archæological Society.
Berkeley	Cal.	University of California.
Boston	Mass.	Museum of Fine Arts.
		North Eastern University School of Engineering.
Brooklyn	N. Y.	Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.
Cambridge	Mass.	Fogg Art Museum. Harvard University.
Chapel Hill	N. C.	University of North Carolina. Cercle français de l'Université.
Chicago	Ill.	Meeting Archæological Institute of America.
		Field National History Museum.
Cleveland	Ohio	Museum of Art. Archæological Society.
Colorado Springs	Colo.	Archæological Society.
Detroit	Michigan	Detroit Institute of Art.

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Durham	N. C.	Trinity College. Watts Hospital.
Greensboro	N. C.	North Carolina College for Women.
Los Angeles	Cal.	University of Southern California.
Madison	Wiscon.	University of Wisconsin.
New Haven	Conn.	Yale University.
Newport	R. I.	Art Association of Newport.
New York	N. Y.	Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York University. French Institute. Columbia University. Belgian Bureau.
Palo Alto	Cal.	Stanford University.
Pasadena	Cal.	Technological Institute. Alliance française.
Philadelphia	Pa.	University Museum. Archæological Society.
Pittsburgh	Pa.	Carnegie Museum.
Princeton	N. J.	Princeton University and Archæo- logical Society.
Richmond	Pa.	Archæological Society.
St Louis	Miss.	Archæological Society.
Salt Lake City	Utah.	University of Utah.
San Diego	Cal.	San Diego Museum.
San Francisco	Cal.	Archæological Society.
Santa Fé	N. M.	Art Gallery.
Urbana	Ill.	University of Illinois Faculty Club.
Washington	D. C.	Archæological Society (Belgian Embassy). George Washington University. Trinity College (Brookland).

Everywhere I met with sympathetic audiences, interested in Egyptological subjects. The great discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamon had undoubtedly quickened the general curiosity concerning the Antiquities of Egypt. Nevertheless, I should have been very much astonished if it had been announced to me beforehand that I should

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see among my auditors two Indian women, as was the case at the Museum of Santa Fé.

On different sides I have been assured that, in spite of my being handicapped by the use of another than my native tongue, my audience was generally able to follow without overmuch difficulty my commentary on the pictures thrown upon the screen. I had the satisfaction—and that more than once—of seeing one or another of those present come to me after the lecture to ask for additional explanations.

I have thought it better to make no attempt to modify the general presentation of the lectures. The book must therefore be considered as the exact reflection of the lectures as they were actually delivered and the illustrations are nothing other than the reproduction of the pictures which were thrown upon the screen during the lecture.

I am particularly desirous of expressing here my lively gratitude to the C. R. B. Educational Foundation and to the Archæological Institute of America. The former not only helped make it possible for me to give the lectures, but also have given considerable aid in securing their publication. Thanks to both of them I was enabled to discover the veritable treasures possessed by the great American Museums in their collections of Egyptian Antiquities. To Professor Wallace E. Caldwell of the University of North Carolina I owe thanks for his activity in securing the publication of the book by his University Press, as well as for his editorial supervision of the work. I am grateful to Mr. Ludlow Bull of the Metropolitan Museum for a careful reading of the proofs and many important corrections and suggestions.

I brought back with me numerous photographs due to the generosity of my colleagues, who, with scarcely a single exception, have allowed me to utilize them in my

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publications. Already, in a volume entitled " Documents pour servir à l'étude de l'art égyptien " (Documents serving for the Study of Egyptian Art), which will be published about the same time as these Lectures, several plates are consecrated to monuments of the first order preserved in American Museums.

I wish to mention very especially the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the University Museum, Philadelphia and the Oriental Institute, Chicago, where I spent many hours to be counted amongst the most instructive in my career.

The development of the Egyptological Museums has been prodigiously rapid. Since the directors of the great Museums have recognized the importance of the antiquities of the Valley of the Nile in their bearing upon the general history of civilization, no pains have been spared to create collections and to enrich them in every possible way. The reports of the American Excavations Expeditions in Egypt since the beginning of the xxth century constitute, without any manner of doubt, the most important contribution to the progress of Egyptian Archæology.

The method of organization in American Museums has been so effective, I do not hesitate to say that they are, to a far greater extent than European collections, calculated remarkably to instruct and interest the public.

I wish to convey my sincerest thanks to Miss E. L. Thompson, who translated three Lectures and revised the remaining three, prior to my tour in the United States. She has also revised the text of the present volume, translated the Foreword and assisted in correcting the proofs.

I cannot conclude this Foreword without once more assuring my friend, Perrin C. Galpin, Secretary to the C. R. B. Educational Foundation, of my deep and lasting gratitude.

Jean CAPART.

FIRST LECTURE

Some Masterpieces of Egyptian Art.

SOME MASTERPIECES OF EGYPTIAN ART

IT may seem strange for a lecturer to begin by affirming that the subject he wants to treat is still very little known to him and that, moreover, he is convinced that the public, in all countries, is hardly prepared to admit some of the ideas which he intends to develop. Nevertheless, this is indeed the situation in which I now find myself.

After a century of excavations in the valley of the Nile, and notwithstanding the numerous works published by specialists, knowledge of the monuments of the art of the Pharaohs has not greatly advanced. Materials for study have been accumulated in considerable quantities in the museums of the whole world; tens of thousands of square yards of pictures and of bas-reliefs have been discovered in the temples and the tombs of the valley of the Nile, and yet no one can boast of the possession of more than a very superficial view of a matter which still needs careful study. Moreover, one soon perceives that the fortunes of discovery accumulate documents for certain periods, while leaving others barely represented by a few rare specimens. Even where it seems that we have every reason to be satisfied with the quantity of works of art which have come down to us, it is impossible to forget that it is especially the temples and the tombs which have been saved from destruction, while of the palaces and the houses only insignificant remains are left. This means that we can study the artistic manifestations in only one section—an important one, it is true—of Egyptian life. We cannot, however, generalize from the results that this study alone may have procured for us.

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One of the first conclusions forced upon the student is that Egyptian art presents itself in characters infinitely more diverse than one is generally inclined to believe and that knowledge of it is susceptible of furnishing interesting solutions to a whole series of general problems suggested by the study of art in general.

For the public the very idea of Egyptian art is dominated by a few uniform opinions. It is thought that the art of ancient Egypt remained identical for several thousands of years without one single artist having ever sought, or even having been able to seek any modification, any novelty. It is hastily judged in a few sentences in which the word "hieratic" occupies the chief place. People speak of stiff attitudes, of stony gestures, of clumsy movements, of inexperience, of childish attempts. They underline what they call the inherent blemishes of all youthful art. When the author of some general manual on the history of art consents, by way of introduction, to give a strictly limited space to Egyptian art, it is felt that he places it, unhesitatingly, in the category of barbarous arts, and it is with a sentiment of satisfaction that he reaches Greek art, "the miracle of Greek art," which is alleged to have realized, for the first time, the æsthetic ideal.

During the last few years, the situation has begun to change; a few Egyptian works force the admiration of the public and the attention of the art critics. But those who work in this domain frequently remark that the persons to whom one presents such monuments for the first time manifest their surprise by saying: "It's strange; that doesn't look Egyptian at all!" which is equivalent to saying that, in their mind, the best works of art found in Egypt are masterpieces only in the measure that they are not in Egyptian style. According to them, they are the results of mistakes on the part of the ancient artists.

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I cannot think of analyzing with you the multiple reasons for these conceptions. It would not be difficult for me to develop the question methodically. I have no doubt that at the end of a lecture devoted to the particular point you would be led to reform your fundamental judgments on Egyptian art. Perhaps, on the

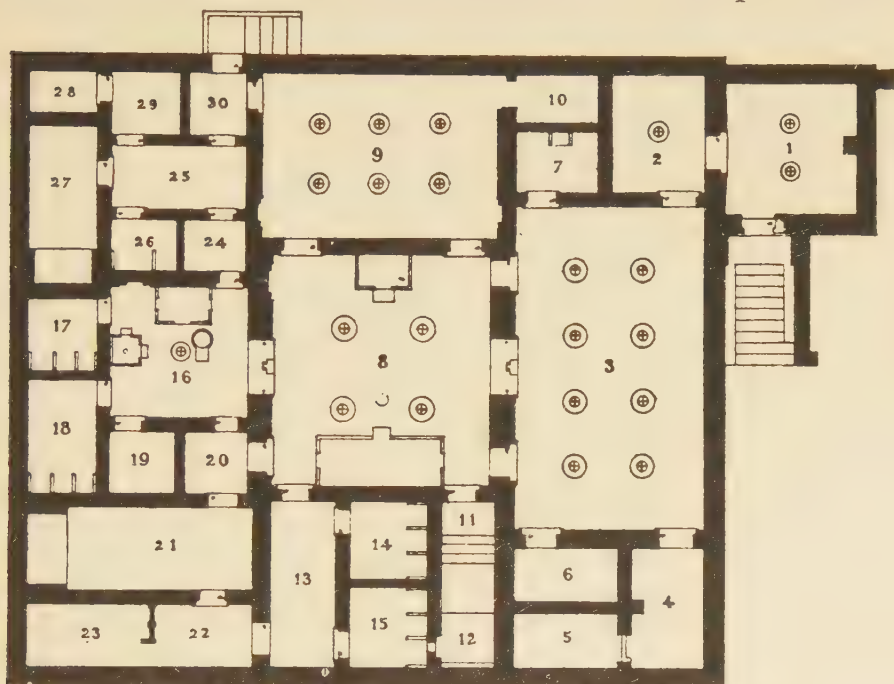


FIG. 1. HOUSE AT TELL EL-AMARNA.

(After F. G. Newton.)

occasion of your next visit to a museum, you would look more attentively at the specimens exhibited in the Egyptian department and, after this examination, you might be convinced that my explanations were not paradoxical. But you will doubtless prefer me to have recourse to the direct method, to show you, upon the screen, a selection of works of art, and to leave to you the task of concluding,

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whether or no, the ancient Egyptians created an art which deserves to be called classical. You will then be in a position to say if, in the different branches of artistic activity, they have, unquestionably, produced masterpieces.



Let us begin with their architecture. At once the idea of the colossal comes to our minds. We think of the pyramids, of the temples with their obelisks and their gigantic statues; we see the hypostyle halls with columns and architraves, the proportions of which surpass what has been executed in other countries. Assuredly, the idea of their constructors was to consecrate to the gods "Temples of Eternity"—as the texts say—capable of resisting all causes of destruction. Nevertheless—let us not forget this—these are but transpositions into stone of architectural forms realized in other materials for the houses and the palaces. Here it was granite, sandstone, limestone; there it was brick and wood which constituted the elements the architects combined. The misfortune is that they did not seek to create two distinct types of architecture to correspond to the essentially different characters of the materials they utilized.

To a considerable extent, the stone monuments are but the translation, heavy and strained, of constructions destined for the living, which, being ephemeral, could not have sufficed to lodge the gods and the dead whose existence was to be eternal. The unbaked bricks have gone back to the earth; the wood has disappeared through the action of time, of men, and even of ants. Once only, for the town of Tell el-Amarna, have special circumstances preserved the remains of habitations sufficient to allow of our studying the plan and making restorations in which fancy has no share.

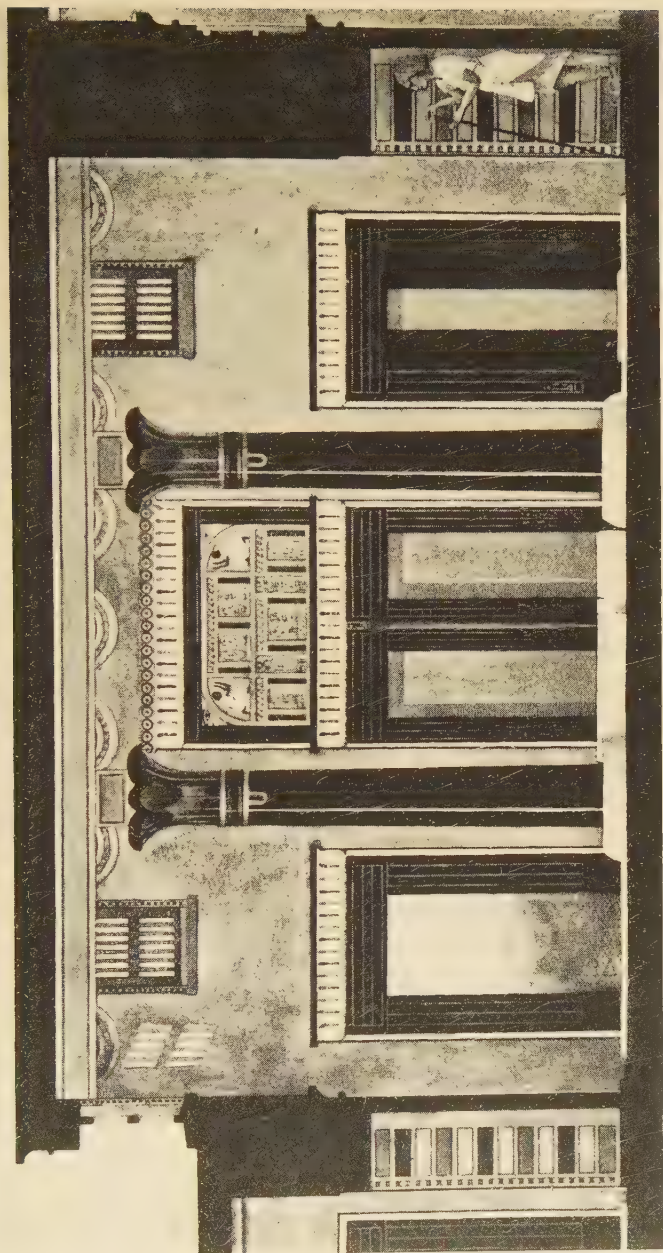


FIG. 2.

(After L. Borchardt.)

RESTORATION OF THE HALL.

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These houses were constructed in the middle of large and beautiful gardens, with ponds and pleasure-pavilions ; the outbuildings, which included the warehouses, the work-shops, the granaries, and the servants' quarters,



FIG. 3.

(After F. G. Newton.)

RESTORATION OF THE HALL.

were grouped separately. For the master's dwelling a type had been adopted, which frequently repeated with slight variations, had become the classical model of a comfortable residence.

If we glance at a plan (Fig. 1), we shall be struck by its clearness, to a certain extent modern. The house with



FIG. 4.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

DOOR WITH FAN-LIGHT.

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its verandas, its central hall, its suites of rooms in which a bathroom is generally included; all that is well conceived and could still be used nowadays. The restorations of the hall (Figs. 2 and 3), whether they be made by a German or an English archæologist, are practically identical. They give an impression of airiness and gaiety very different from the feeling one experiences in the

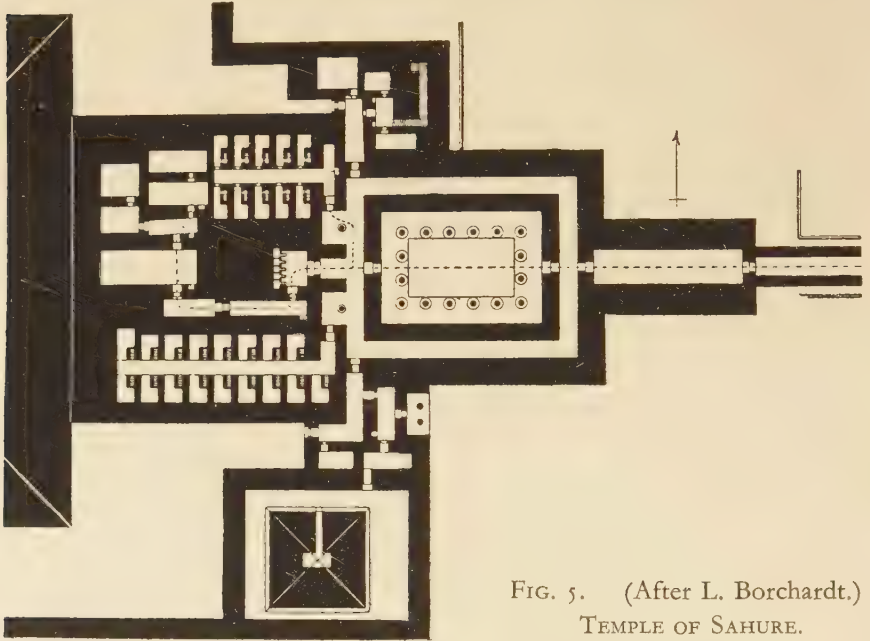


FIG. 5. (After L. Borchardt.)
TEMPLE OF SAHURE.

hypostyle halls of the temples, the columns of which thickset and crowded, left insufficient space between them. The doors (Fig. 4) which led from the hall into the principal rooms were often ornamented with open-work designs of which we have happily faithful copies sculptured in the stone of the tombs. In the upper part, carved ornamentations combined different designs: falcons' heads, tufts of papyrus, protective amulets, little columns; sometimes, but

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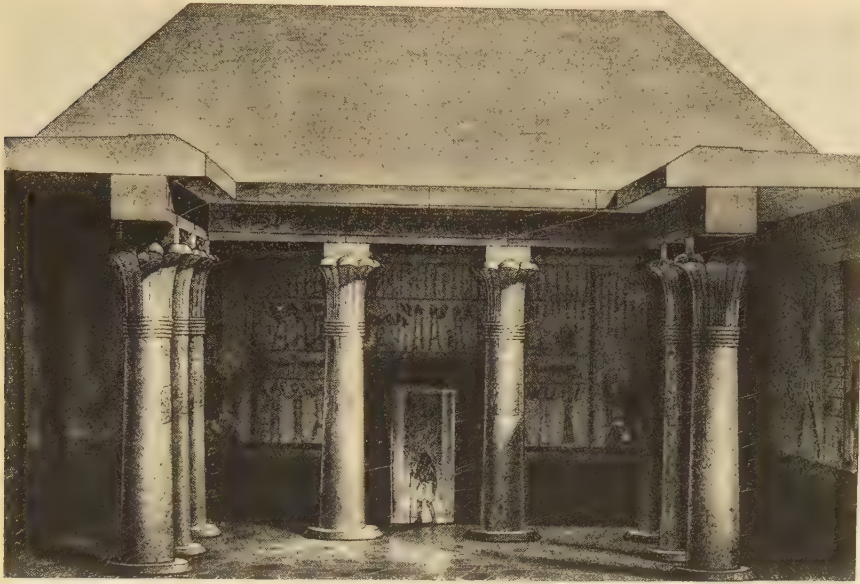


FIG. 6.

(After L. Borchardt.)

RESTORATION OF THE ATRIUM.

more rarely, figures of sphinxes or cats; the whole mixed with hieroglyphic inscriptions. The simplicity of the plan of these houses at once reveals a veritable science of architecture in a country where dwellings, long since, had passed beyond the stage of merely utilitarian construction.

If we go back from the XVIIIth Dynasty, about 1500 B.C., to the Vth Dynasty, before 3000 B.C., we can invoke as an example the Temple of Sahure, the arrangement of which is perfectly balanced (Fig. 5). Here, again, the elements discovered have been sufficiently numerous to allow of an absolutely certain restoration. The atrium (Fig. 6), with its beautiful columns decorated with palms, has preserved proportions doubtless differing but little from those which were used in the palaces of the kings for whom the temple of the pyramid was to be the house of eternity.

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FIG. 7. (After Jean Capart.) COLUMNS OF THE IIIrd DYNASTY.

The pavement and the basement of the walls were in basalt; the columns in red granite enriched with colours; the principal part of the walls in fine white limestone, on which stood out many-coloured bas-reliefs celebrating the glory of the king or showing him in the company of the gods.

Let us now direct our attention to one of the fundamental elements of the architecture. When the spaces to be covered became too large to be crossed by beams, recourse was had to a support which took the form either of a pillar or of a column. We have just noticed the use of dactyliform columns, at Tell el-Amarna and in the Temple of Sahure in the necropolis of Abusir.

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Certain hieroglyphics of the Old Kingdom and a few tiny fragments discovered in the royal tombs of the Ist Dynasty in Abydos allow of the supposition that the architects had very early employed polygonal fluted columns, the general appearance of which must have been analogous to that of the Doric columns. As a matter of fact, in the necropolis of Benihasan, in the porches of several tombs of the Middle Kingdom, pillars were known to which archæologists, for a century, have given the name of proto-Doric. It seems vain to discuss the question, whether porches of this kind determined the creation of the Doric Order by the Greeks. It suffices, for the glory of the Egyptian architects, that they should have created a type which forces comparison with one of the most lasting productions of the classical masters.



FIG. 8.

(After Jean Capart.)

PORCH AT DÊR EL-BAHRÎ.

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In the necropolis of Sakkara, Mr. Firth has recently cleared a funeral chapel of a small pyramid of the IIIrd Dynasty, the façade of which is ornamented with imbedded fluted columns (Fig. 7). If one were to publish a photograph of it, without any indication of its origin, it is certain that few archæologists would hesitate to recognize in it a perfect example of Greek architecture.

Again and again in the study of ancient Egypt we have the same surprise. The farther back we go, the more the monuments give us an impression of perfection. This caused Nestor L'Hôte, one of the companions of Champollion, to declare : " Of Egyptian art we know only the decay. "

When we admired the beautiful porch of Queen Hat-



FIG. 9.

(After Jean Capart.)

COURT OF LUXOR TEMPLE.

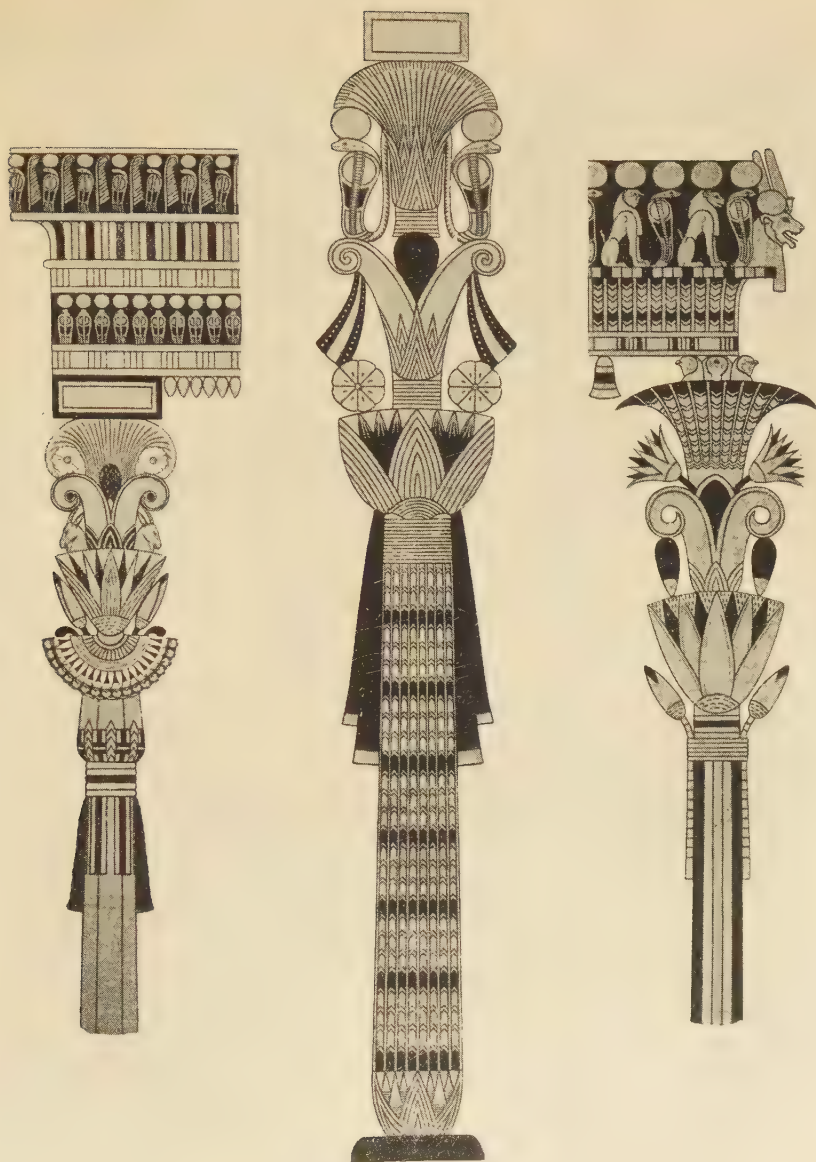


FIG. 10.

(After Prisse d'Avennes.)

PAINTED COLUMNS.

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shepsut at Dêr el-Bahri (XVIIIth Dynaſty) (Fig. 8), we were not far from considering it the moſt perfect monument of Egyptian architecture; but now that we have ſeen the delicate fluted pillars of the IIIrd Dynaſty, we ſhall perhaps be tempted to ſay that the fineſt work of the architects of the great queen was greatly inferior to the models of their predecessors.

Among the moſt typical architectural creations, we muſt give a foremoſt place to the columns, the forms of which were inſpired by the lotus and the papyrus. Let us ſay, in order to correct a common miſtake, that lotiform columns are extremely rare, whereas papyriform columns were employed at all periods. They are ſo abundant that they may be conſidered as the predominating element, at leaſt in the architecture of the temples and the tombs. The great courtyard of Amenhotep III, at Luxor, offers a fine example of theſe columns conceived as a cluster of ſtalks (Fig. 9). The binding at the upper part has naturally determined the bulbous formation of the lower part. The typical curve of the capital reſults from the form of the tufts of papyrus ſtill half closed. All the details originate in the characteristics of the plant, to ſuch a point that one may affirm, without exaggeration, that there exiſt few examples of conventional treatment more logical and, at the ſame time, more elegant.

Let us not forget that when worked in wood and ſtucco the type could be more nervous, more ſlender. The different plants were combined in the ſame column which ſuggeſted rather the idea of a great bouquet than that of a bundle of reeds. We can get only a glimpse of theſe realizations in the pretty painted columns which can be ſtudied in certain tombs (Fig. 10). It is only at a comparatively recent epoch, at the Saïte period, in the VIIth century B.C., that the architects will endeavour to transpose



FIG. 11.

(After A. Mariette.)

PORTICO OF PHILAE.

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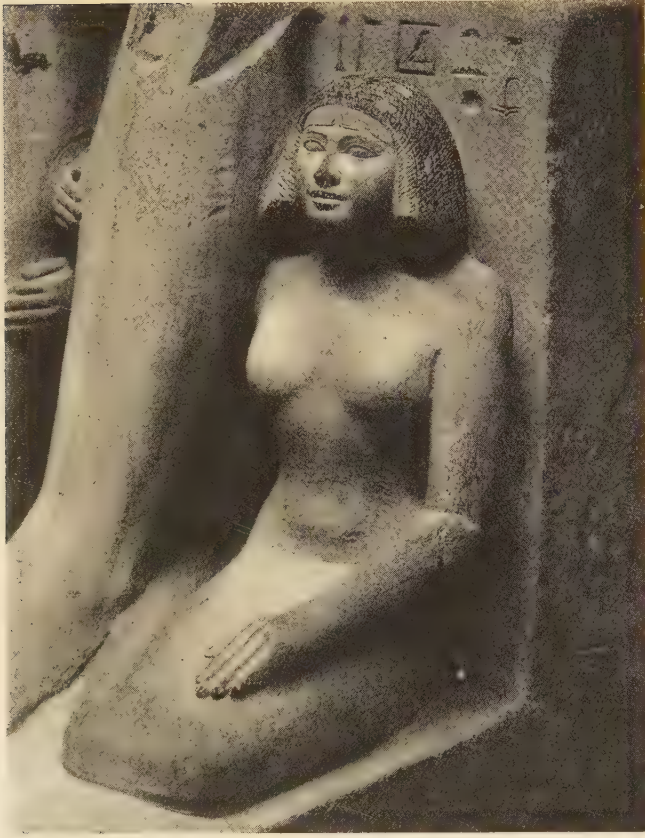


FIG. 12. (After Jean Capart.) THE WIFE OF AKHI.

into stone these more complex types (Fig. 11). The floral columns with composite capitals will give to the temples of the Greek epoch and even of the Roman epoch a decoration as original as it is graceful. Nevertheless, he who has grasped the beauty of the ancient papyrus form

order will not hesitate to prefer it to the exuberance of the porches of Edfu or of Philæ.



A first point is to be considered when we pass on to the study of the sculpture. From indications in the texts, we know that, along with statues in stone which were the exception, innumerable figures in wood, ivory, and metal

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were sculptured. Now, it is indisputable that, of all these materials, stone has offered the best resistance to all the causes of destruction. The case is similar for the art of sculpture with the Greeks : the works of the great Ionian sculptors in bronze are known to us only by the copies in marble executed especially during the Roman epoch.

The problem is therefore nearly the same as for architecture : the stone statue is only a transposition made with the object of assuring the permanence of an image which served as a support to the soul of a god or of a dead person. Consequently, it is not in the sculpture in stone that we must seek to find to what extent the artists succeeded in rendering human forms as faithfully in the attitudes of repose as in those of active movement. Let us not forget that the greater number of the works which



FIG. 13.

(After R. Delbrück.)

ROYAL HEAD. BOSTON MUSEUM.

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have come down to us have been derived from temples and tombs, or to be more exact, that they had been executed by their authors almost exclusively to serve as idols or as "living" statues for distinguished dead persons. They consequently enter into strictly limited categories and their subjects could hardly be varied. Everybody knows these statues of kings and of great personages seated or standing in attitudes which one may call normal. I do not think it necessary to remind you of the Chephren in diorite at Cairo, the Sheikh-el-Beled, or the famous scribes of Cairo and the Louvre. The dignity of the one, the naturalness, the accent of intense life in the others assign to them a foremost place among the masterpieces of art. But it would be an error to think that these are exceptional productions and that they mark, in some sort, a flash of genius in the midst of general mediocrity and inexperience. When one sets to work to study the sculpture of the Old Kingdom, it is necessary first of all to make a critical selection among all the statues preserved in the museums. Unhappily, it is customary to assemble them side by side, whatever may be the quality of their execution.

Let us put on one side the vulgar replicas made by second-class workmen to satisfy the needs of customers desirous of imitating the fashions of the upper classes. There will remain to us a number more considerable than one would think at first sight of excellent works which testify to a sureness of execution only possible to artists who have received a veritable academic training. When—instead of stopping short at the examination of the principal personage—our attention is directed to episodic figures, we can discover delightful details. Often, indeed, at the foot of the Master, carved on a large scale, we find little figures of the mother, of the wife,

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FIG. 14.

(After E. Brugsch.)

RANOFER.

of the children. Look at the wife of Akhi in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 12), a tiny figure only a few centimetres high, but a marvel of grace and delicacy. Can one believe that the artist who carved it did not know anatomy marvellously well? In the treatment of the forms of the body, barely veiled by the garment, we find the same sureness of touch as in the most expressive heads of

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the period. It is well to notice this, for it cannot be denied that, very often, in the stone statues the maximum of the effort has been directed to the rendering of the head, whilst the bodies have been neglected. The sculptor limited himself to indicating the general subject with broad touches. Therefore, in order to convince a person of the perfection of the sculpture, it is perhaps preferable to begin by showing him only detached heads. As a matter of fact, can one, for example, find anything better than the royal head discovered by Reisner at Gizeh and preserved in the Boston Museum (Fig. 13)? Let us compare it at once with the head of a statue of the High-Priest of Ptah, Ranofer, at Cairo (Fig. 14). Doubtless we shall find them different in expression, but we shall not fail to recognize that they belong to the same period, that they express the same feeling for nature, that they translate a common ideal of physical beauty which is to become an ideal of æsthetic beauty. It is not the moment to ask ourselves if these are real portraits in the sense in which we understand this, or if it is a question only of beautiful bodies of eternity placed at the disposal of the disincarnate souls of the King or of the High-Priest.

I can also only indicate in passing the curious problem raised by the discovery of funeral heads of the same period. They were placed in the wells of the tombs and show us types differing greatly, closer to reality perhaps. One cannot fail to be charmed by the almost modern character of one of these heads preserved in the Vienna Museum (Fig. 15).

I have spoken of artistic ideals. The works which have just been thrown upon the screen suffice to demonstrate that at the epoch of the Old Kingdom naturalism predominated. At other periods, on the contrary, idealism prevails; and, when we draw a parallel between the

SOME MASTERPIECES OF EGYPTIAN ART



FIG. 15. (After H. Junker.) FUNERAL HEAD. VIENNA MUSEUM.

heads of the period of the Pyramids and others of the XVIIIth Dynasty, we ask ourselves how it is possible still to maintain that Egyptian art has never changed, that it knows but one tune, which, at times, it manages to execute to perfection.

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FIG. 16. (Stoclet Collection, Brussels.) AMENHOTEP IV.

The bust of Queen Nofretete, wife of Amenhotep IV, found at Tell el-Amarna and now in the Berlin Museum is, without a shadow of doubt, one of the marvels of antique art (Fig. 17). It reveals to us in the sculptor Thutmose an entirely different sensibility, aspirations probably unknown to his predecessors who, twenty centuries at least before him, had

carved Ranofer or the wife of Akhi. The studies found in the ruins of his house have allowed us to follow the genesis of the work (Fig. 18). The sculptor began by making his model after nature, as true as that of



FIG. 17.

(After L. Borchardt.)

QUEEN NOFRETETE.

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the best sculptors of the Old Kingdom; then he set himself to work on his subject in such a way as to force it, willy-nilly, into the framework imposed by the fashion of his time (Fig. 16).

We may believe that it is to the same Thutmose we owe the exquisite little figure representing one of the young daughters of Amenhotep IV (Fig. 19). She was bought by Petrie many years ago and she remained for a long time in a glass-case in University College, London, without attracting the attention she deserved. One fine day, they discovered that the figure was a marvel, equal to the productions of the Greek artists. I had hard work to convince one of the most celebrated classical archaeologists that this piece of work was dated seven centuries before the first efforts of the Greeks in statuary.

But Egyptian sculpture is often reproached with having never been able to represent a body moving. We will answer first of all that, in the majority of cases, one does not very well see what could have led the artist to desire to represent his model in the attitude of movement.

Even in our own day, the majority of portraits, whatever may be their aim, represent models in a conventional attitude of rest. The Greeks carved moving bodies only when they wished to commemorate the victories of their athletes. We must take great care not to attribute this monotony to incapacity on the part of the artist, and must also take into account what the customers required of the producer.

When Ramses II wished to place in the Temple of Amon a statuette representing him in the very act of making an offering to the god, the sculptor succeeded in representing this particular attitude of the King's body with a suppleness worthy of all praise (Fig. 176).

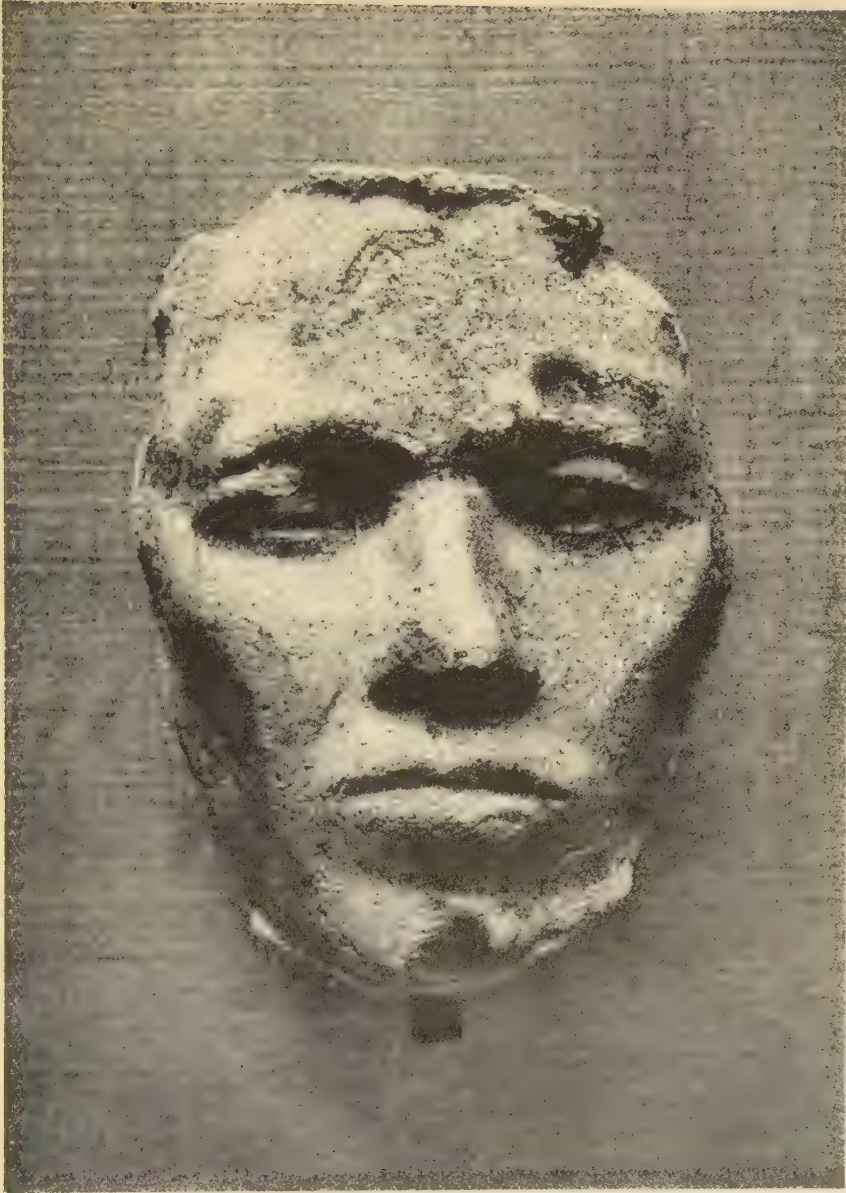


FIG. 18.

(After H. Schäfer.)

MODEL FROM NATURE.

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It is probably in the domain of industrial art that the most ingenious and clever creations were realized. Here, it was no longer a question of following religious or funeral traditions consecrated by the customs of centuries. On the contrary, it was necessary to charm the Egyptian man or woman of refinement by presenting a graceful and original object the principal merit of which should be its novelty. Some rare specimens have survived by a real miracle of preservation. One of the most beautiful is, assuredly, the little figure at Liverpool, showing the old slave bringing upon his back the receptacle which contains the aromatic paste (Fig. 20). See how exactly the effort has been represented, first in the position of the feet which assures a steady walk under the burden, then in the way in which the man bends the left arm, while clenching his fist so as to tighten the muscles in order to keep his balance. We are very far from a first attempt and the statuette we admire is certainly the result of patient efforts and of long study.

The critics do not fail to remark that this precious object is constructed according to the principles of the law of frontality. The personage is perfectly in equilibrium without any deviation to the right or the left of the perpendicular. One cannot make the same criticism of the statuette of Leyden where the old woman bends decidedly to counteract the weight of the too heavy burden (Fig. 21). It will be said, that here there is lateral deviation, but, at any rate, no torsion. Look at the little figure in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (Fig. 22). This time the personage has briskly seized the vase from the ground to raise it on to the left shoulder and the trunk quite naturally turns on the hips in a perfect movement. Here we are in the presence of a little specimen which shows us, in its plastic realization, a science equal to that of the great



FIG. 19.

(After Jean Capart.)

THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF AMENHOTEP IV.

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FIG. 20. (After Jean Capart.)

OLD SLAVE. LIVERPOOL.

Greek sculptors who, it was thought, had been the first to conceive their model as a solid moving freely in the air. Moreover, let us not fail to notice that such figures mark an important conquest in the history of art. As a matter of fact, it is no longer a question of the idol of a special god, or the statue of a particular sovereign or of a specific illustrious deceased personage, that is to say of individualized works ; this time what the sculptor has produced is a general type which synthesizes "the bearer of burdens," just as the great Greek sculptors will create later the Discobolus and the Doryphorus, who do not represent particular athletes.

★
★ ★

It is evident that the problem of copying beings by drawing on a surface has always presented great difficulties. The reduction of the three dimensions to two is an extremely complex problem susceptible of several solutions. In our civilization the process of perspective has generally



FIG. 21.

(After H. Fechheimer.)
THE OLD WOMAN.

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FIG. 22.

(After Jean Capart.)

THE LITTLE FIGURE IN THE CABINET DES MÉDAILLES. PARIS.

imposed itself, but it would be a mistake to wish to bring all the others forcibly to it. When we look at a drawing, a picture or an engraving in very low relief executed by the Egyptians, let us beware of wanting to correct in thought what is not conformable to our methods. It is better, and it is juster, to try to understand the Egyptian system and to see if, within its own limits, the ancients reached perfection or not. A few representations of animals will allow us to

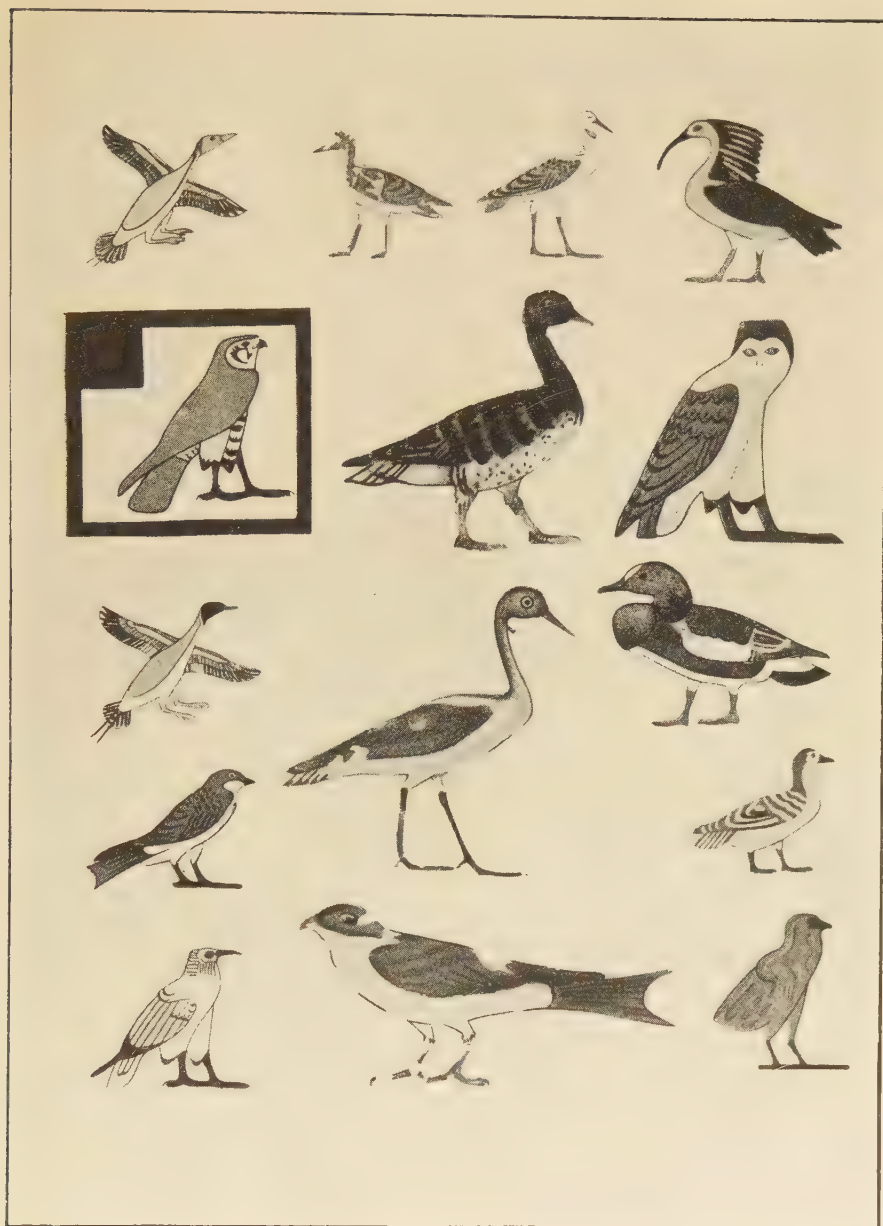


FIG. 23.

(After Blackden and Carter.)
HIEROGLYPHICS OF BIRDS.

LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART

recognize without difficulty the supreme skill of the Egyptians in seizing the characteristics of each species. Here, for example, are a few birds borrowed from the inscriptions of the Middle Kingdom (Fig. 23). Yes, they are only signs used in writing and not, as one might think, illustrations from a manual of zoology. Let us next take a fragment from a fishing scene in a tomb of the period of the pyramids (Fig. 24). Were a naturalist to take the trouble to identify the fish painted in the nets of the *Miraculous Draughts of Fishes*, he would have many reasons to complain of the want of accuracy of modern artists. On the contrary, when specialists study the fishes in the reliefs of the Old Kingdom they are surprised to see with what accuracy the species and the varieties have been copied. Recently Monsieur Gaillard of the Lyons Museum published, one alongside of the other, the Egyptian pictures and the illustrations from a modern treatise of zoology and showed that, more than once, the Egyptian had seized the characteristic "ways" of the fish better than the modern illustrator who worked from specimens preserved in alcohol. As a matter of fact, the Egyptian renders better the impression of the creature living in the water. It is remarkable that the best proof brought forward up to the present of the acute powers of observation in the old artists contemporary with the pyramids is furnished to us by the researches of naturalists !

On studying the numerous scenes of the chase in the marshes, we are struck with the reality of the tiniest details. The birds in their nests or flying away in flocks at the approach of the hunter, the little ones scared by the presence of a rat, all these are rendered in such a way as to make the most conscientious artists jealous. Look at the cat watching for prey in a painting at Benihasan (Fig. 25).



FIG. 24.

(After C. Gaillard.)

FISH OF THE OLD KINGDOM.

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The strained attention of the animal lying in wait is rendered with almost photographic exactness. Many centuries later, when a painter decorated the chest of Tutankhamon and executed the proud lion who is turning round to face the royal hunter, he maintained on the same level of perfection the art of seizing the characteristic bearing of animals (Fig. 26).

If we pass on from the examination of the figures of animals to the representations of human beings, we may think that we have the right to accuse the Egyptians of inexperience. They did not succeed, it appears, in making themselves masters of the difficulties which then arose. This is because, generally speaking, the animals may be considered as entirely typical in silhouette; it is not the same when it is a question of a human body.

If we had time to analyze the great figures of the gods, of the kings, of the chief officials, we should see according to what process of decomposition the artist arrived at drawing the entire body just as it is and not just as it appears. We should see the disadvantages of such a system; but, at the same time, possibilities incompatible with our perspective. But it is perhaps more interesting to direct our attention to some examples of episodic figures which will allow us to realize the talent of the artists as it manifested itself under circumstances in which, perhaps, they felt themselves less dominated by the spirit of the system.

As Champollion saw very clearly, it is rather that they avoid perspective than that they are ignorant of it. At the same time, we remark with what care, with what charm, certain accessory figures have been executed by the decorator of tombs who, nevertheless, always accomplished his conventional task, ordered so as to secure the success of a funeral rite. In order to sustain his work, the artist

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had not that constant aspiration after the beautiful, that desire that his skill should be admired, which are at the basis of almost all our modern artistic production.

When we hurriedly visit the tombs of the Old Kingdom, called *maṣtabas*, we are often inclined to think that they offer little variety. As soon as we stop to examine details, we perceive that there is in them infinite diversity and often variants of extreme interest. I own that I spent hours studying carefully the *maṣtaba* of the Leyden Museum and the publication in which all its walls were reproduced photographically, without having noticed the charming little figure to which an album of Egyptian art has just drawn attention (Fig. 27). It forms part



FIG. 25.

(After H. Carter.)

CAT ON WATCH.

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of an agricultural scene. A young workman has ceased his task; he has put his sickle under his arm, has grasped a bundle of onions, and is greedily crunching one of them.

In Ankh-ma-Hor's maṣtaba in a snaring scene, one can pick out a figure of extraordinary vivacity of movement (Fig. 28). The hunters are ready to draw the cord which



FIG. 26.

(After H. Burton.)

THE PROUD LION.

SOME MASTERPIECES OF EGYPTIAN ART



FIG. 27.

(After H. P. Bremmer.)

THE YOUNG WORKMAN.

works the net; they are waiting for the signal to be given them by the watcher who, with a single gesture, will indicate the favourable moment. The man has drawn near on all-fours; he is peeping through a screen of plants. All the suppleness of the movement is expressed in a body drawn with the utmost precision, and there is nothing to be corrected in the movement of the shoulders, in the gesture which he executes to give the signal.

Let us now take two examples of reliefs of the Empire. We will borrow them from the Memphite necropolis of the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty, the tombs of which were, unhappily, destroyed at the beginning of the XIXth century, and fragments of which are scattered

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about the world. In the Museum of Leyden, at Pa-aten-emheb's tomb, in a sacrificial scene, we see musicians. The blind harpist is, assuredly, one of the most beautiful figures one can imagine; the modelling of the head is extraordinarily good (Fig. 29). In a relief which is only a few millimetres thick, the skill of the sculptor has succeeded in giving the impression of volume. The other example is a fragment almost unknown, even to specialists, which, nevertheless, has been in the Museum of Bologna for more than a century (Fig. 30). How often has Egyptian art been reproached for its impassiveness! It has been declared incapable of expressing an emotion. See how these men weep! We feel, indeed, that, even in their grief, they

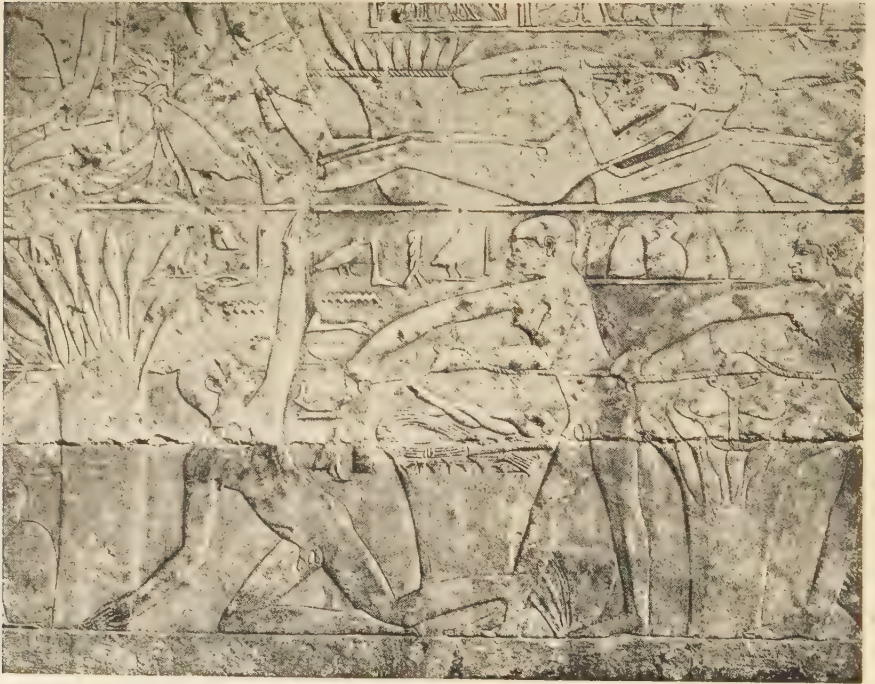


FIG. 28.

(After Jean Capart.)

THE WATCHER.



FIG. 29.

(After H. P. Bremmer.)

THE BLIND HARPER.

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wish to preserve a calm and dignified attitude. But at the moment of the "Farewell to the dead," before the portal of the tomb, they are incapable of restraining their emotion any longer.

A contrast appears in the painting, a very fine one, moreover, in the tomb of Ramose at Thebes. Here is one of the groups of mourners, very skilfully composed (Fig. 31). Some adverse criticism has been made, and rightly, concerning the five feminine figures, one beside the other, in the centre of the picture, with their similar silhouettes projecting slightly beyond one another. Certainly the intention is to express the pathetic; but we feel that we have to do with hired mourners, whose tears, indicated on the rim of their eyelids, are but a professional artifice.

I said just now that the artists, in certain accessory figures, have shaken themselves free from all convention. The hunting scene in the tomb of Mena at Thebes gives us an excellent proof of this. The master is erect, in a light skiff, accompanied by his wife and children; one young daughter has knelt down and is leaning forward to pick a lotus bud which has tempted her (Fig. 32). A lamentable mutilation has caused the disappearance of the features of the face; but even in this incomplete state, one cannot deny that Mena's little daughter is one of the loveliest things that Egyptian art has left us.



Without considering the question of the religious and magical origin of the art, it is evident that a people which succeeded in developing so early such technical resources could not fail to have recourse to them in the manufacture of articles of daily use. If we reflect on the question, we shall see that it is precisely in this domain that their art must have begun to become a lay art. It is here that

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ingenious minds were able to combine new forms, undeterred by the scruple of leaving the path of tradition and without fear of imperilling the success of a sacred formula. In industrial art the creator of new articles could speculate on the curiosity of the buyer. In the workshops of the



FIG. 30. (After a photograph.) THE WEEPING MEN. BOLOGNA.

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FIG. 31. Phot. Metropolitan Museum. N. Y. GROUP OF MOURNERS.

palaces and of the princely houses, a master full of imagination could propose models to picked workmen. The elegant and refined Egyptians loved the beautiful articles which served for their adornment, which embellished their dwellings and gave to their existence an atmosphere of wealth and good taste.

It was under such conditions that there came into being masterpieces such as the armchair of Tutankhamon, in which, in spite of the precious character of the materials used, nothing gives the slightest impression of tinsel or vulgar luxury (Fig. 88).

We shall no longer be astonished at the perfection of the



FIG. 32.

(After W. M. Fl. Petrie.)

THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF MENA.

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figures which decorate the sticks of this famous king (Fig. 33). If all the great monuments of Egyptian sculpture had disappeared, the broad manner in which the Asiatic prisoner has been carved would suffice to lead us to suspect the realization of a great art.

Has there been created, at any period of art whatever, a jewel more perfect than the pectoral of Sesostris I, one of the treasures of the Metropolitan Museum? (Fig. 184.) One may maintain that nothing in the choice of the designs is left to the fancy of the artist. It is a speaking coat of arms. The falcons are gods protecting the royal cartouche; every detail has its symbolical value, but they might have been arranged in a thousand other ways. As a matter of fact, they have been differently combined in other Egyptian monuments, but here the goldsmith has revealed his masterly touch by creating a whole so admirably balanced that it seems impossible to equal it.

Let us endeavour to picture what may have been the aspect of one of these palaces in which the gold and silver plate, the vases of many-coloured porcelain or of alabaster made of every object of current use a perfect marvel of beauty.

It will suffice to show the silver vase found at Basta (Fig. 177), the golden handle of which represents a kid, the lovely enamelled chalices copying the form of the lotus (Fig. 101), or certain alabaster vases discovered in the tomb of the parents-in-law of Amenhotep III (Fig. 181).

At each great epoch of Egyptian history these beautiful objects show special forms. There were really certain currents of fashion, probably inspired by the example of the court which gave the tone.

Into the midst of such a civilization the women introduced a particular touch of elegance. It was for their use, without any manner of doubt, that were reserved these

SOME MASTERPIECES OF EGYPTIAN ART



FIG. 33.

(After H. Burton.)

THE ASIATIC PRISONER.

delicate perfume-spoons of which there exist a hundred varieties, proving that, if the themes remained the same, they succeeded wonderfully in varying the interpretations.

We will content ourselves with three specimens (Fig. 92); on one a girl is playing a musical instrument in the midst of a fantastic efflorescence of lotus with long, slender stems. On another have been modelled two figures of Bes, the god of dance, music, and feminine adornment. These belong to University College, London. The third is in the Museum of Copenhagen. On it we find, treated

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in a superior fashion, a subject which we have already studied in the statuary (Figs. 20-22).

To complete the framework of the mode of existence of these elegant Egyptians who had given such importance to art in their daily life, it remains for us to draw attention to the delicate friezes and to the decoration of the ceilings. A few rare fragments have been found in the remains of houses, but the tombs, especially those of Thebes, have shown us that the repertory of forms was inexhaustible (Figs. 107 and 108). In most cases, it is a matter of imitations of hangings. Once only, in the tomb of Thutmose IV, some fragments of tapestry have been found and the experts who have examined them tell us that they suffice to prove the greatest technical perfection (Fig. 34). We may hope that the tomb of Tutankhamon will furnish us with further surprises of this order.



We have summoned the Egyptian artists before a tribunal. We have asked them to make good their claim : they ask that we should hold them for the equals of the great masters in all times and in all countries. I have defended their cause to the best of my ability, choosing from their records the documents which appeared to me the most conclusive. It is for you to pronounce the sentence ; but I think I may await it with absolute confidence.



FIG. 34.

(After Howard Carter.)

TAPESTRY.

SECOND LECTURE

Problems of Egyptian Æsthetics.

PROBLEMS OF EGYPTIAN AESTHETICS

AS soon as we set ourselves to study Egyptian art attentively, we perceive that there are a certain number of problems which present themselves imperatively and the solution of which is indispensable to an exact appreciation of the works of art. Indeed, we must be very careful not to think that the productions of the old artists of the valley of the Nile may be considered simply by starting from the point of view of our modern æsthetic ideas. It is comparatively easy for us to decide which works please us the most, which answer most readily to our feeling for the beautiful. Thence it seems but one step to seek to rediscover the state of mind of their creators and to reason about their productions as we should do in the case of a contemporary artist. This is a profound error, and as soon as we have recognized it to be such, we cannot help smiling when we read certain commentaries published about the chief specimens of Egyptian art.

Shall we sketch a few of the great problems which the art of the Pharaohs places before us?

Let us begin by remarking that, according to all appearance, we possess no work which belongs, properly speaking, to the period of the formation of Egyptian art. Several times, in the course of history, we can follow its decline. During each period when the Egyptian Empire was shaken to its very foundations by foreign invasions, it was impossible to maintain the traditions. As soon as the restoration was assured, the kings strove to give back to art all its splendour. They did not create a new art ;

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FIG. 35.

SLATE PALETTE OF NARMER.
(After J. E. Quibell.)

they sought their models in the most ancient epochs of the civilization of the Pharaohs.

I should not wish you to think because of this that Egyptian art, at all its great epochs, appears to us as immutable. On a common groundwork of invariable principles, always taking the same themes, the artists have, nevertheless, succeeded in giving to their works an ac-

cent which allows of their being classified, generally, without much difficulty. But it is essential to understand clearly that, up to the present, hardly has one monument been discovered which belongs to the period of research — probably very long — during which the Egyptians were devoting themselves to the experiments necessary before

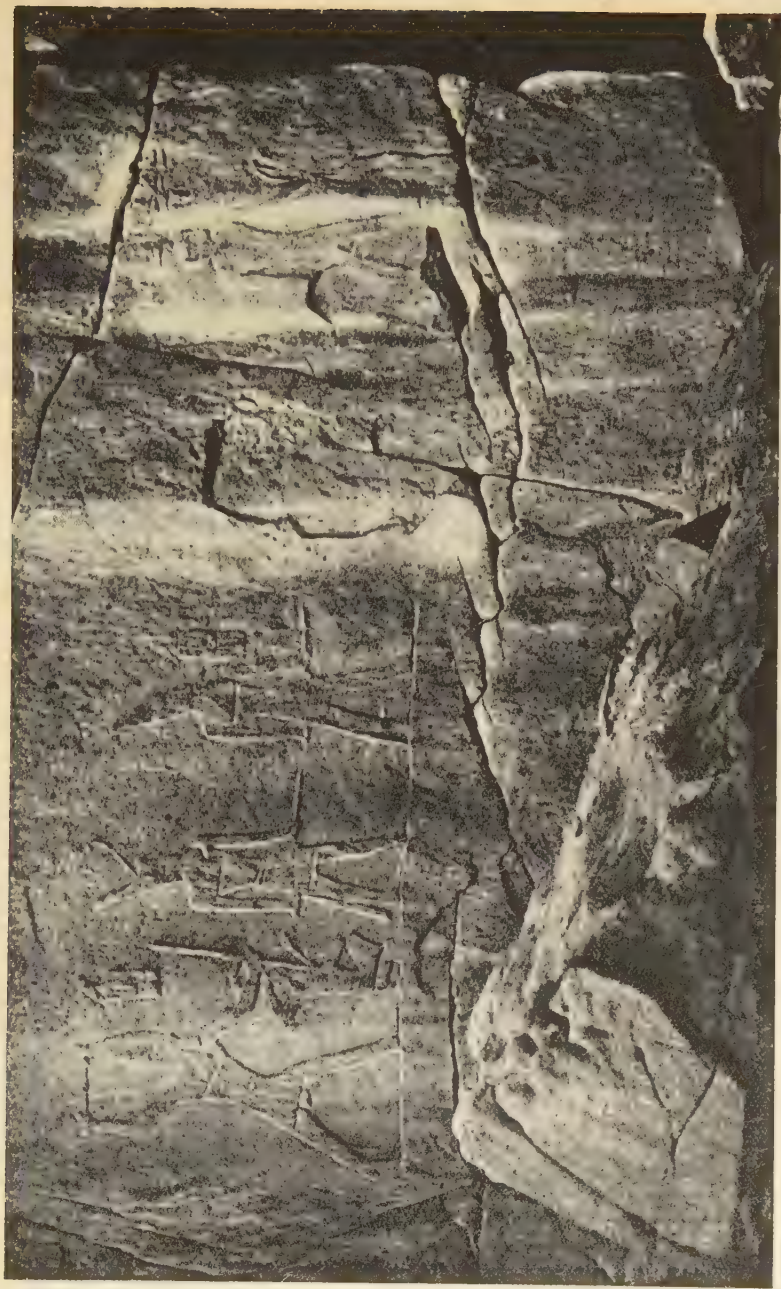


FIG. 36.

(After W. M. Fl. Petrie.)

ROCK CARVING IN THE WADI MAGHARA.

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the establishment of the fundamental principles to which all their artistic creations for thousands of years were going to be exceptionally faithful. Our ignorance of the beginnings of the art is on a par with our ignorance of the early days of royalty in Egypt. For us the curtain goes up at the moment when Menes united under his sceptre the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt, an achievement which, in the eyes of the Egyptians, made him worthy of being placed in the first rank of the innumerable Pharaohs whom they had classed in thirty dynasties.

It is possible that Narmer is no other than Menes. At all events, he was a sovereign of the beginning of the 1st Dynasty. On a slate palette discovered in the Temple of Hieraconpolis, we can observe the existence in Egyptian art from this moment of themes which will be transmitted from age to age without great modifications (Fig. 35). Up to the Roman period, when they wish to commemorate the victory of the King of Egypt over his enemies, they will show us the Pharaoh seizing in this manner the conquered and imploring enemy, above whom he brandishes the club.

When Semerkhet, another king of the 1st Dynasty, wishes to mark his taking possession of the mining districts of Sinai, it is the same image which he causes to be engraved, high up on the rocks of the Wadi Maghara (Fig. 36). If one should consider that the drawing is wanting in suppleness and testifies to what we are inclined to call "archaic stiffness," it would be well to turn our attention to a small contemporary work of art : a little ivory tablet which belonged to the MacGregor collection (Fig. 37).

After these most ancient examples, it is interesting to see the interpretation of the same theme in the XVIIIth Dynasty. According to the most moderate estimates, there are more

PROBLEMS OF EGYPTIAN AESTHETICS

than two thousand years between the scenes of the 1st Dynasty and those of Thutmose III. The one which is the best preserved is in the Temple of Karnak, at the VIIth pylon (Fig. 39). The only modification worth



FIG. 37. (After W. Spiegelberg.) IVORY TABLET OF KING DEN.

noticing is derived from the fact that the single conquered enemy has been replaced by a veritable bunch of prisoners. It is a fashion, more ingenious than elegant, of illustrating that passage of the hymns of victory in which the enemies are depicted as united in a bundle in the fist of the Pharaoh.

What we have just noticed in the bas-reliefs is also to be

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observed in the statues. A cylindrical seal of King Den (Fig. 38) has happily preserved for us a record of the statues in molten gold dating from the 1st Dynasty. One of them represented the king standing, his left leg advanced, holding his staff and club, in an attitude so frequent in Egyptian sculpture that I have proposed to call it the "normal attitude." At the side are figured more complicated groups; in the first the king, who is in a boat, is



FIG. 38. (After L. Borchardt.) CYLINDRICAL SEAL OF KING DEN.

harpooning a hippopotamus; in the second, he is struggling at close quarters with a monster. These are, assuredly, very surprising pieces of work, and work of which the great sculpture in stone has preserved for us no examples. This liberty of movement was only possible when working in metal, wood, ivory and, in general, any material more plastic than stone.

Another specimen from the 1st Dynasty is worthy of being cited: it is the great stele in the Museum of the Louvre, discovered in the tomb of a sovereign often called the "Serpent King." (Fig. 40.) In reality we see only an inscription: the Horus name of the Pharaoh. But the whole is so admirably composed that this stele is justly called a masterpiece of art. This falcon, perched upon a frame terminated at the base by a piece of architectural ornamentation, is no longer simply the image of a bird. It is a god and I would even rather say it is the



PL. 39

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

RELIEF OF THUTMOSE III.

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hieroglyphic which serves to express the Horus name. At all periods of Egyptian civilization it will be written by this sign. To no artist has it occurred to draw over again a falcon from life. That would have been perfectly legitimate if it were only a religious symbol. It is no longer so when it is a question of a sign in a writing the forms of which, fixed long ago, are even attributed to the invention of the god Thoth. This monument introduces us into the very heart of the question, so deeply interesting, of the relation between art and writing.

Indeed, we may ask ourselves which of the two preceded the other. Can one believe that the invention of a pictorial writing was the origin of an art? I am more inclined to think that the very ancient Egyptians had been accustomed to draw figures of every kind for a long time before some ingenious mind discovered, in the practice of drawing, a method of writing. Everybody knows that the hieroglyphics began by expressing the idea of the being or of the thing represented. Then, by a slow development, of which traces remain in the orthography of the historical epochs, these signs ended by expressing more often the sounds of the language. The writing, at first pictorial, finished by becoming above all phonetic. All these evolutions were already terminated by the Ist Dynasty.

It appears, therefore, that the very forms in which we meet the hieroglyphics bear witness to the level which Egyptian art had reached at the time of the invention of the system. Let us now look at some specimens borrowed from different epochs. Birds copied in the texts of Benihasan of the Middle Kingdom show extremely characteristic silhouettes; but, at the same time, they afford us very clear examples of Egyptian methods of projection (Fig. 23).

Look now at the little animals taken from the inscriptions

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of the Vth Dynasty (Figs. 41 and 42). Can one imagine figures more living, in spite of their simplification? From time to time on the same wall of a tomb one can find, simultaneously, an animal represented naturally and as a sign of writing; the two images are identical and we may deduce from this that the art of writing is not different from the art of drawing.

Let us take a yet more ancient example: some signs from an inscription found in the tomb of a brother of Cheops, the constructor of the Great Pyramid (Fig. 43). We find here, particularly, a ram marvellously represented, which makes one think of an illustration in a manual of zoology. All the



FIG. 40.

(After G. Bénédict.)

STELE OF KING SERPENT.

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peculiarities of the breed are well marked. When we come across handsome rams again on the models of sculptors of the Saïte period, in the VIIth century B.C. (Fig. 44), we observe that the artist of more recent times finds it hard to equal his remote predecessors. Meanwhile the breeds of sheep in the valley of the Nile had undergone a change and the hieroglyphic sign had followed the transformation.

If we may hope one day to discover documents on the beginnings of Egyptian art, it is probable that the latter

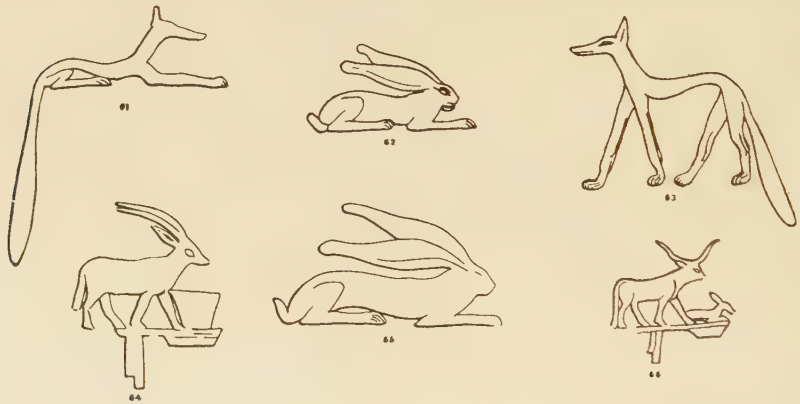


FIG. 41. (After N. de G. Davies.) ANIMALS FROM INSCRIPTIONS.

will carry us thousands of years further back still. It is not forbidden to think that, later on, one may establish a connection between Egyptian art and the engravings and pictures of the palæolithic grottoes.

We know that the great discoveries in the caves of France and Spain have enabled us to solve, to a considerable extent, the problem of the magical origin of art. When the primitives penetrated into the labyrinth of the grottoes to model, engrave, or paint figures of animals in the most profound obscurity, sometimes in places very difficult to get at, it is evident that they had another object in view than that of causing their artistic talent to

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be admired. It has been shown that they sought to exercise a magical power over the animals thus represented. It would be a mistake to consider that we have here manifestations of an art placed at the service of magic. It would be truer to say that we find magic creating artistic technique. The day these processes of representation are

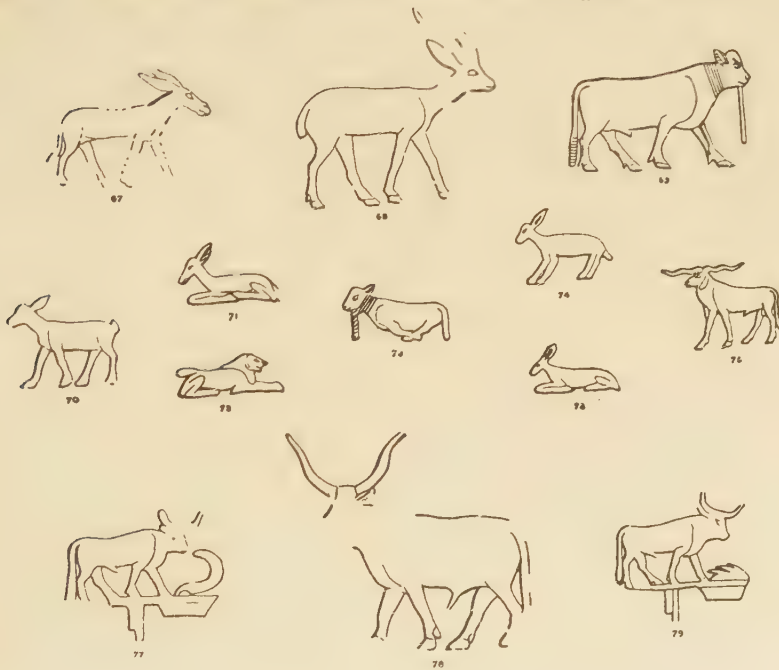


FIG. 42. (After N. de G. Davies.) ANIMALS FROM INSCRIPTIONS.

diverted from their primitive object, when the drawer of pictures, who formerly intended to exercise magical charm, begins to amuse himself by making other figures with a pleasurable aim, we shall find ourselves for the first time face to face with works of art in the sense in which æstheticians understand the term.

In Egypt, for thousands of years, the accomplishment of religious and funerary rites rendered necessary the

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fabrication of objects the essential aim of which was magical.

When, in a tomb at Assiut, closed since the day of the



FIG. 43. (After a photograph.) INSCRIPTION. HILDESHEIM.

funeral, we discover a whole collection of little wooden figures (Fig. 46), we have no hesitation in recognizing there a process for putting servants at the disposal of their



FIG. 44.

(After E. Brugsch.)

MODELS OF SCULPTORS OF THE SAÏTE PERIOD.

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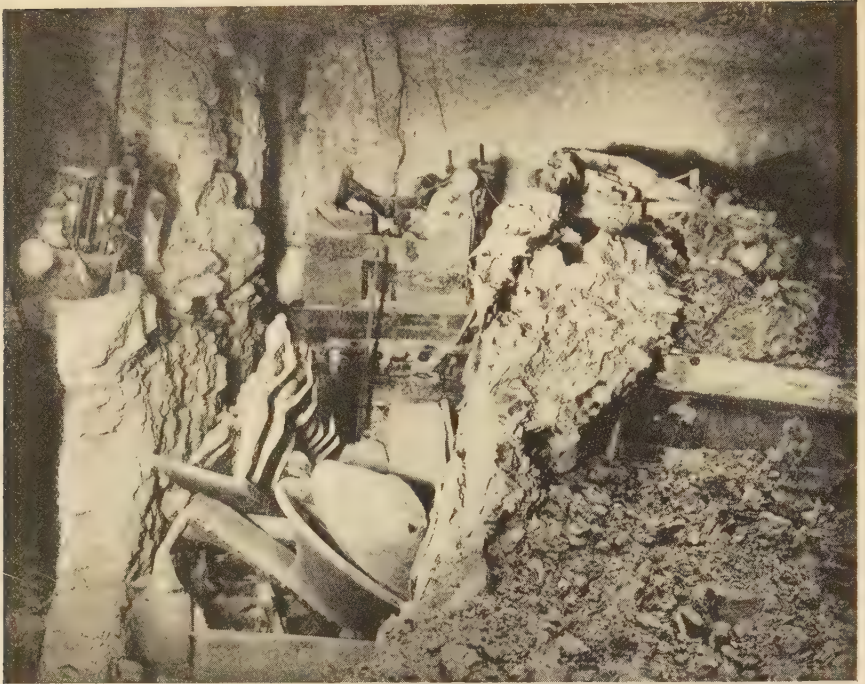


FIG. 45.

(After J. E. Quibell.)

TOMB OF KARENEN.

deceased master. In certain countries servants are still put to death in order that they may accompany him into the other life. In Egypt they were replaced by these little figures whose presence was judged sufficient for the satisfaction of the defunct. Sometimes they were heaped pell-mell beside the coffin, as in the tomb of Karenen at Sakkara (Fig. 45). Here it even seems that they have been arranged without much care for their preservation. At other times they were put in a small special room, as in the astonishing tomb discovered at Dêr el-Bahri by the excavators from the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

It is hard to picture the extreme diversity of these small



FIG. 46.

(After E. Chassinat.)

WOODEN FIGURES FOUND AT ASSIUT.

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models. If the Egyptians had been begged to execute for an ethnographical museum groups representing life in the valley of the Nile, with all the diversity of industries and crafts practised there, they could not have done better.

A few examples will suffice to give an idea of this.

Have you not the impression that you are throwing an indiscreet glance over the wall of a court in which the women are busy spinning, erecting a loom and weaving stuffs? All the details are so exactly rendered that technicians have been able to use this little group for a demonstration of ancient methods (Fig. 186).

It is clear that it is not a question of a work of art ; nevertheless, the model is so well executed that we may call the person who created it a true artist. The minutiae in the execution are carried to a point which is really extraordinary.

Here is another group which represents a carpenter's workshop (Fig. 185). We surprise his apprentices hard at work, sawing planks, boring holes, cutting out mortises. In the middle is a large chest which, at the moment of discovery, was still sealed. When it was opened, in it was found a complete collection of carpenter's tools in miniature.

If the dead man wished to voyage, he had only to get into his boat which is there, complete, with the crew busy manœuvring the set sail (Fig. 187). On another boat a complete suite of furniture had been put into the cabin, with not even the chests under the bed left out.

Thus no detail is lost sight of. These groups so strongly suggest " dolls' houses, " that many authors have not hesitated to speak of " toys " which the Egyptians took with them into their tombs. When we look at the model of the fishermen (Fig. 188), we are tempted to say, as a

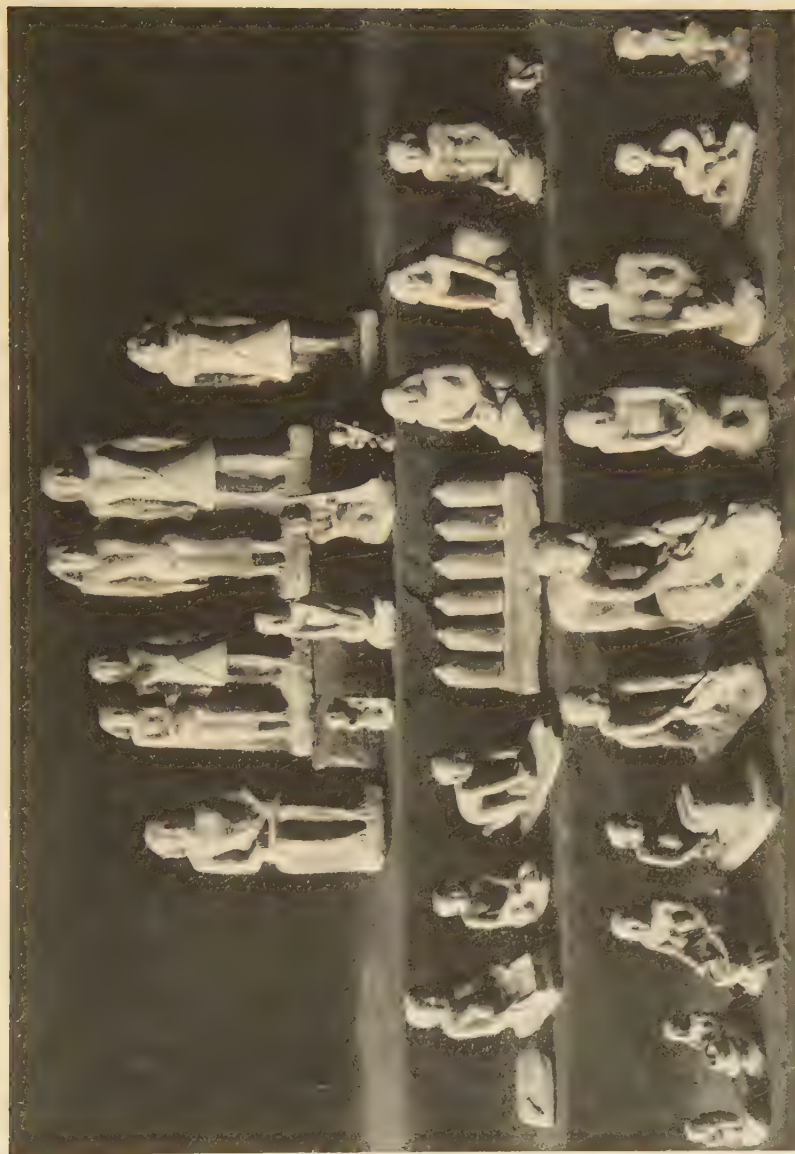


FIG. 47.

(After J. H. Breasted.)

LITTLE FIGURES OF SERVANTS. CHICAGO.

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child would, that there is a real little net, with real little fishes.

Unhappily, the destruction of these fragile pieces of work, made of wood, covered over with painted stucco, was to be feared. If the Egyptians were not much afraid of the damp, they could not forget that a few white ants would suffice to annihilate these models and thus deprive the deceased of the possession, judged to be indispensable, of his servants of eternity. They therefore sought in every way to assure their preservation; they sculptured them in stone, they drew and painted them on the walls of the tomb. Doubtless, it was not easy to transpose into stone all these complicated subjects, with the variety of attitudes necessitated by the different crafts. An exceptionally rich series of little figures of servants in stone was discovered at Gizeh and is now preserved in the Oriental Institute of Chicago (Fig. 47). Here we recognize musicians, butchers, potters, bakers, brewers, etc. But what dominates in this group are the statues representing the master and his wife. They were, in fact, the fundamental pieces of the funerary furniture. Perhaps one should say that the statue of the deceased was of such importance that examples of it were multiplied as many times as possible in order to increase by so much the chances of preservation.

Authors often speak of "portrait statues" and this is how they reason: in order to survive, the disembodied soul needs a new body, which is the statue. In order that the latter may be enabled to fulfil its office, it must be a representation, as exact as possible, of the personage for whom it is destined. Consequently the funerary statue, by definition, can only be a faithful portrait of the dead man. It is the same when it is a question of royal statues placed in the temples.

We shall see in a moment the objections to be offered to



FIG. 48. (After L. Borchardt.) MASK OF CHEPHREN. LEIPZIG.

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FIG. 49. (After E. Brugsch.)
RANOFER.

such a theory formulated in this too absolute manner. In the presence of certain royal pieces of sculpture of the Old Kingdom, one has a very vivid impression of finding oneself in front of portraits. See, for instance, the fine mask, preserved at Leipzig, of Chephren (Fig. 48), the builder of one of the great pyramids of Gizeh. How can we escape the illusion that we know every feature of Chephren perfectly well and that, to use a familiar locution, we should recognize him unhesitatingly if we met him in the street. It is the same when we look at that marvellous royal head in Boston Museum, which authors call either Mycerinus or Shepseskaf (Fig. 13). Why this hesitation? Because the head is not quite the same as other effigies in which one recognizes Mycerinus. However, as it comes from the temple of this king, they try to find in it his son Shepseskaf. If these authors would begin by attentively comparing all the heads of statues representing Chephren

and Mycerinus, they would be astonished to perceive the extreme diversity of type which the figures offer. Before seeking the reason for this, let us examine a few more

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documents which may throw light on the problem.

In the tomb of a high-priest of Ptah, Ranofer, Mariette discovered, alongside of one another, two statues which represented this exalted personage (Figs. 49 and 50). The inscriptions which give his titles and his name allow of no hesitation respecting his identity. In spite of a certain general resemblance, it is impossible to consider the two statues as portraits of the same person. One historian of Egyptian art who had neglected to study the question of their origin attentively did not hesitate to make of them two distinct Ranofer, while another maintained that the sculptor had wished to represent his model at two different ages. Here is a case in which, if we had but one statue, we should be inclined to believe that we possessed the faithful portrait of Ranofer. It is well to add that the high-priest of Ptah appears before us as a man with a young and vigorous body, which is perhaps not quite in accordance with the long sacerdotal career presupposed by his arrival at the summit of the religious hierarchy in the



FIG. 50. (After Jean Capart.)
RANOFER.

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capital. Moreover, it has been remarked for a long time that nearly all these funerary statues of the Old Kingdom show us men and women in the prime of life ; never do they show signs of old age. It is because they wished to give the soul the best possible body of eternity.

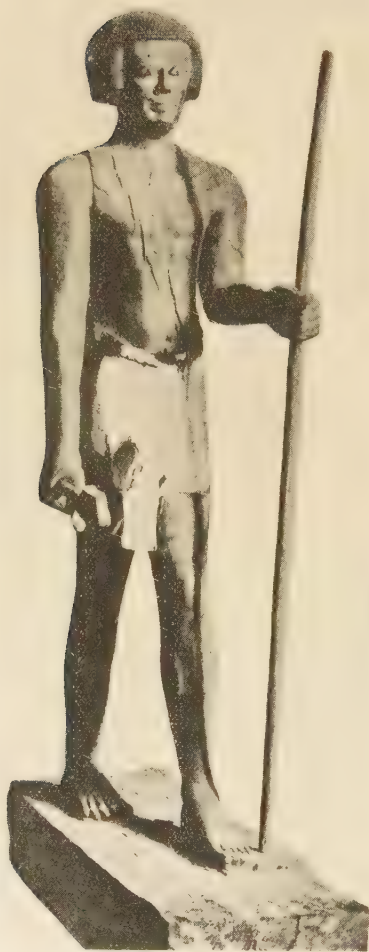


FIG. 51. (After E. Chassinat.)
NAKHITI.

Doubtless the sculptors, desirous of pleasing their customers, were for that very reason obliged to strive to conform their works to the ideal of physical beauty which obtained at their epoch. It was a question of making a body which should be very "living" and, at the same time, very beautiful. We see at once that, under these conditions, the tendency was towards a realism rather general than particular. There were "makers of bodies of eternity," who supplied families with funerary statues destined to serve as supports for the souls of their disembodied relations.

How else can we understand the discovery in one tomb of two statues so unlike as those which were found at Assiut, in the intact sepulchre of a personage of the

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name of Nakhiti (Figs. 51 and 52). The inscription of the dead man's civic status engraved upon the base was considered enough to secure the magical efficacy of the statues.

We must therefore no longer be surprised at the insuperable difficulty which prevents the making of a reliable iconography of the Pharaohs, any more than at the difference often remarked between the mummies of great personages and the statues which are supposed to represent them. For certain sovereigns, it is amusing to arrange their many statues in a series, from the most refined and elegant type to the coarsest and most unattractive.

The statue of Amenemhet III, of the XIIth Dynasty, found near the temple of this king's pyramid, offers a physiognomy of a peculiarly delicate character and, without any manner of doubt, greatly idealized (Fig. 54). Who could maintain that the statue discovered by Legrain in the Temple of Karnak is of the same man? (Fig. 53.) And yet it is indeed the name of Amenemhet III which we find upon the base. A slight examination shows that the



FIG. 52. (After E. Chassinat.)
NAKHITI.

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inscription is engraved upon a surface which has been retouched. What does this mean? The great kings of

Egypt who, theoretically, could order their sculptors to make as many statues as they pleased, did they then consecrate in the temples, in their name, monuments that were usurped from another? The examples of these usurpations are innumerable and this singularly complicates the study of the history of art in Egypt; but the simple fact of the possible change of a name on a statue, the features of which have not been retouched, shows what we must think of the exactness of the likeness.

I spoke a moment ago of an idealized type. Let us return to this topic. Very early it is possible to observe, alongside of the ideal of physical beauty, the appearance of preoccupations of



FIG. 53. (After G. Legrain.)
AMENEMHET III. KARNAK.



FIG. 54. (After G. Maspero.) AMENEMHET III. HAWARA.



FIG. 55.

(After H. Fechheimer.)

FROM THE STUDIO OF TELL EL-AMARNA.



FIG. 56.

(After G. Bénédict.)

THE OFFICIAL PORTRAIT OF AMENHOTEP IV.

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an æsthetic order. It is this which gives to all these works of the Old Kingdom which are so naturalistic a veritable "style." It is also this which confers upon them the character of works of art, properly so-called. We may admire the skill with which certain wax figures in dioramas or in our fashion-shops have been executed ; nevertheless, no one thinks of giving them a place in the history of sculpture. Notwithstanding this, they might perfectly well serve as magic figures in a tomb conceived according to Egyptian ideas. Why are the ancient statues so different that they deserve to pass into quite another category of human productions? It is because the men who created them had a superior ideal of beauty to which they conformed their models. That is why their works have character. They are no longer manufacturers of magic dolls, but real artists.

The fortunes of excavation, which reserve for us incredible surprises, have brought about the discovery of the studio of the sculptor Thutmose at Tell el-Amarna. There we can surprise the secret of the production of most important works. We find, roughly modelled and without any manner of doubt this time, the features of the king, rendered with an acuteness almost cruel (Fig. 55). But after that the artist takes up his work again, labours at it, retouches it to make it express his ideal of beauty while preserving at the same time the most characteristic traits of his model. The finished work, which we might call the official portrait of Amenhotep IV, is preserved for us by the very fine bust in the Museum of the Louvre (Fig. 56).

The same methods of stylization might be studied in the bas-reliefs and the paintings ; for the procedure, first magical, then artistic, is similar. All that is necessary for the defunct will be represented on the walls of the tomb ;

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similarly, in the temple, ritual representations will insure the perpetuity of the sacrifices to the gods.

It is comparatively easy to model in clay, to carve a piece of wood, or even a block of stone—copying, volume for volume, a human body or the body of an animal. But it

is infinitely more difficult to represent them, other than in silhouette, upon a plane surface. It is moreover probable that the silhouette, determined by the shadow projected, gave birth to the art of drawing.

In the tombs we



FIG. 57. (After J. E. Quibell.)
PANELS OF HESI.



FIG. 58. (After J. E. Quibell.)
PANELS OF HESI.

shall find the same themes as in the sculpture—statues of the deceased in diverse attitudes and representations of his servants in action.

Let us first examine the panels found in the tomb of a noble personage named Hesi, who lived at the beginning of the IIIrd Dynasty (Figs. 57 and 58). Mariette discovered

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them in the remote part of niches where the statues were generally erected. They were therefore certainly the projections of pieces of sculpture on wooden panels, perhaps simply the replicas of statues which were really placed in the niches.

We observe at once that the figure is not seen in perspective and that the image shows us all the so-called "faults" of Egyptian drawing—the eye is full to the front in a head shown in profile, the shoulders also face the spectator, whereas the figure walks toward the right.

But have we really any right to speak about *faults* in the presence of a panel which shows us such perfection in the execution of the details (Fig. 59). See how well marked the collar-bones are ; see with what delicacy the attachments and the articulations of the arms have been rendered. Is it allowable to speak of inexperience before a piece of work which testifies to so much sureness in the execution and to so much anatomical truth in details?

If we had only one figure posed in this fashion, we might assuredly see here the results of imperfectly exercised powers of observation. It happens that our children who are making their first essays in drawing construct little figures, the various parts of whose bodies are seen following different angles. But in Egypt all the figures, with but rare exceptions, are drawn in this way ; the most vigorously executed, such as the panels of Hesi, as much as the clumsiest ones on the tomb-stones of the most wretched cemeteries, show us the application of the same principle. Can we imagine that once upon a time the image of a man had been badly drawn, and then for centuries and centuries this bad drawing had been copied indefinitely, without any effort to better it, because it was considered an academic model?

Let us examine for a few minutes the representation of



FIG. 19

(After E. Brugsch.)

PANEL OF HESI. DETAIL.

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Neferartnef, on one of the walls of his tomb in the Museum of Brussels (Fig. 60). Here we find all that combination of planes which gave to the figure of Hesi its strange appearance. We notice also that the triangular apron which was in front of the loin cloth is brought forward as if it were seen full to the front. Moreover, our man is not alone ; he is accompanied by his wife, who was standing beside him and who, nevertheless, has been drawn behind him.

If we wish clearly to understand this peculiar convention, we must for a time abandon the study of human figures and undertake the examination of architectural representations. As a matter of fact, the latter will furnish us with a certain number of examples which are particularly clear.

Who would believe that the Egyptian architects could have constructed their great monuments if they had not been capable of previously drawing up precise plans? It is possible to conceive of a clever sculptor managing to carve a statue from a block of stone almost haphazard by realizing the forms which he has imagined. In the same way a painter may sketch directly upon a wall the scene he desires to represent. But, on the other hand, it is impossible to quarry the blocks which are to serve for the construction of a temple unless, at any moment, the workmen can consult the indications of a plan on which each stone has its place marked.

Happily some of these plans have been discovered. The study of them shows that the Egyptians had found the means of combining in a single drawing elements that we can represent only by plans, elevations and sections. Sometimes in the tombs they wished to give the deceased the image of his terrestrial house, and from these representations we are able to study all its arrangements. The



FIG. 60. (After a photograph.) NEFERARTNEF AND HIS WIFE.

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Egyptian designer has laid down upon the plan the various architectural elements—columns, doors, pavilions, and pools. The most instructive example is supplied by the tombs of Tell el-Amarna, where one of the palaces of Amenhotep IV was represented (Figs. 61 and 62). The same building is reproduced several times from different angles ; once from the front, another time from the side. The

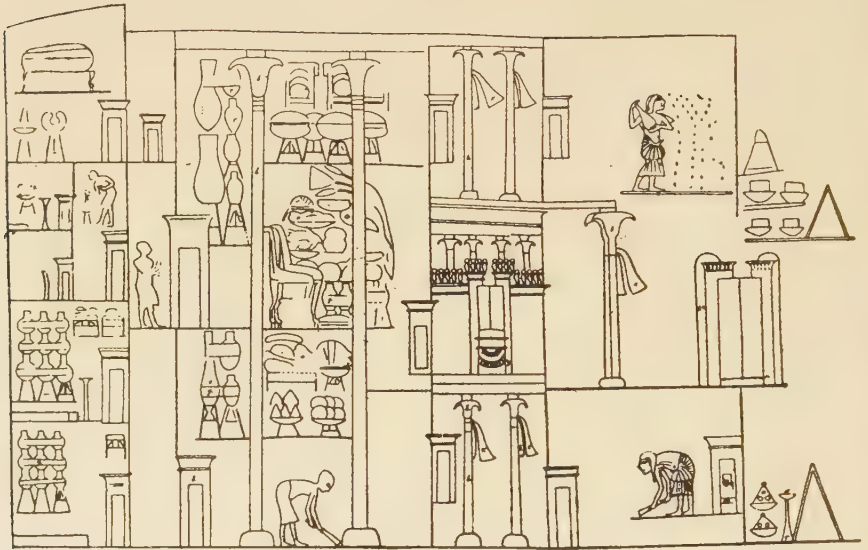


FIG. 61.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

PALACE OF TELL EL AMARNA.

comparison of these documents is exceedingly instructive, for we understand from them how the same parts have been treated differently in the one case and in the other. We find the very same court the background of which is occupied by a large balcony where the royal family showed themselves on feast-days. In the front view we see it drawn laid down in the sense of the principal axis of the building. On the side view, it has been turned round a quarter of a revolution before being laid down ;

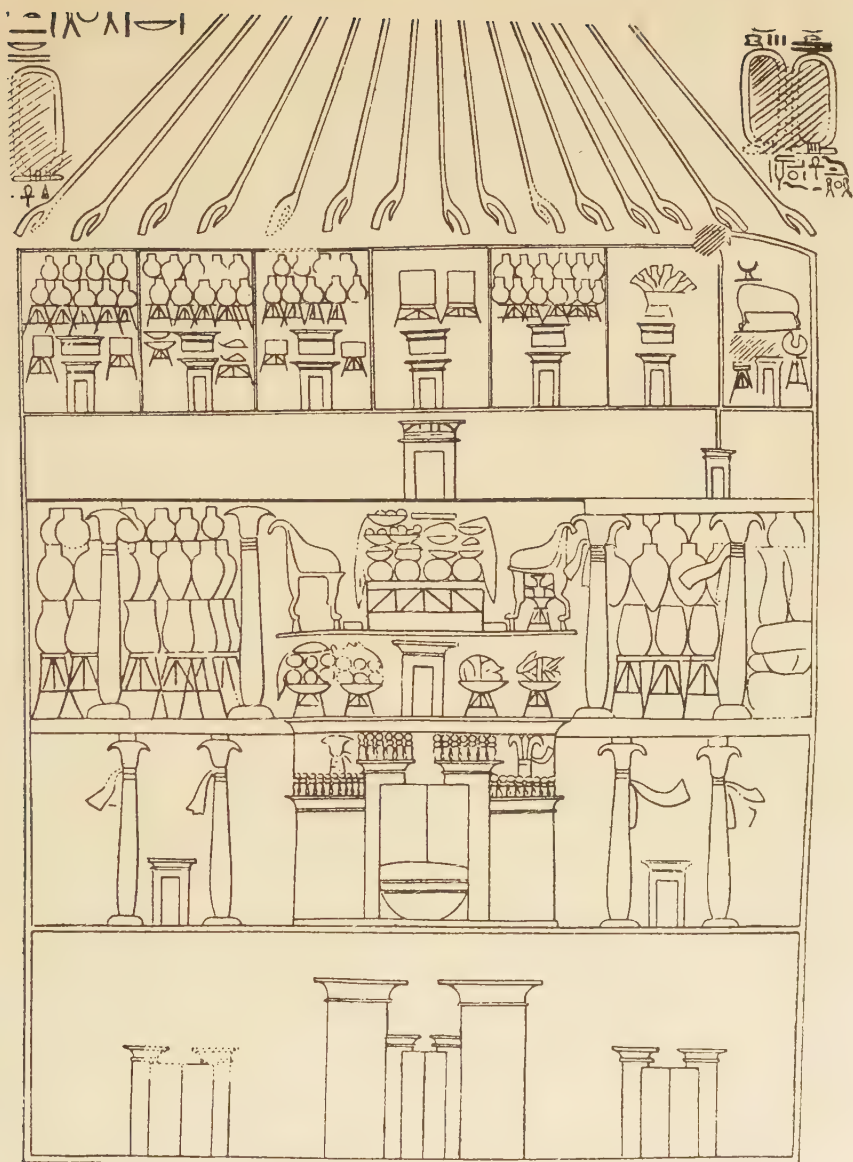


FIG. 62.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

PALACE OF TELL EL-AMARNA.

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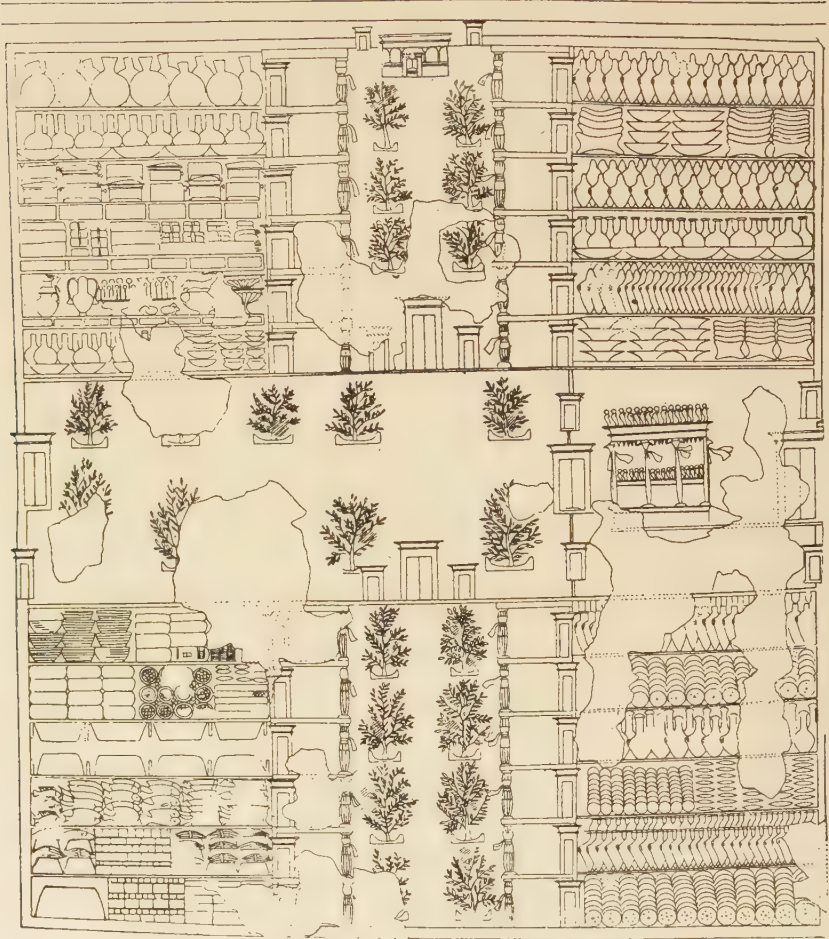


FIG. 63.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

STOREHOUSES IN THE TEMPLE OF TELL EL-AMARNA.

in a certain sense, it has been treated like the shoulders in the figure of Hesi.

On a plan drawn by a modern designer the floral columns would be marked by a small circle.

The Egyptian drawing, thanks to the method employed,



FIG. 64.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

THE GARDEN OF REKHMARA.

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can mark precisely each of the floral types used in the construction.

Let us examine another plan : the storehouses in the Temple of Tell el-Amarna (Fig. 63). They are in a vast square enclosure and are divided into four sections by two avenues which cut one another at right angles. The trees which shade them are carefully drawn, each with the little earthen basin destined to hold the water with which they were watered. The door of each warehouse opens under a portico. Notice in what a curious way all these doors face the person looking at the picture and how the columns of the porticos appear to be placed one on top of the other. Inside each room they have represented the goods it contained. On the left we can see heaps of grain, one row of which is drawn topsy-turvy.

The Egyptian was not in the least bothered by this method of representation. A very typical example is afforded us by a painting in the tomb of Rekhmara at Thebes (Fig. 64). Here we see a fountain in the middle of a garden planted with trees. The sycamores and palm-trees have been just simply laid down in all directions, towards the top, towards the bottom, to the right, to the left and diagonally. It needs only a very slight effort for us to reconstruct the aspect of the garden with its lines of trees in which the different species alternated with the fine regularity of a French park.

From time to time, as in the tomb of Sebekhotep (Fig. 65), they have, however, brought together all the divergent elements by organizing the picture in relation to the spectator. We might speak here of laying down and turning round ; other examples would show us laying down and sliding along. They use this latter method when there is a risk of the different elements covering

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FIG. 65. (After W. Wreszinski.) THE GARDEN OF SEBEKHOTEP.

one another. The image gains in clearness, but the reading of it necessitates a series of corrections.

We see that, taking the matter as a whole, it is a question of a graphic art which is before all things analytical and descriptive, and which has nothing in common with our perspective. The Egyptian is a realist who strives to render things just as they are ; our artists are rather illusionists who try to show them as they appear.

Egyptian drawing aims at supplying us with the greatest number of elements possible, in order that we may be enabled to make a complete intellectual reconstruction of the reality. All the modern arts which are derived from

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classical art and which endeavour to represent on a plane solids in space can give us, it is true, the appearance of exactness ; they never show us, as the Egyptians have done, a tangible reality.

And now let us look at these artists at work, these artists charged, not with the task of decorating tombs, but with that of enclosing in them for the benefit of the soul that repertory of scenes which will assure him a blissful rest. When the quarry-men and the masons have prepared the very smooth surfaces on which the different episodes will be arranged, the artist-workman will not have to compose pictures as our artists might do in their studios. We know from numerous indications that they had books of models at their disposal. The latter offered them sufficient resources for them to avoid repeating themselves indefinitely in a mechanical fashion. Whatever may have been the liberty which was given them of varying the details, one thing was immutable—the canon of the proportions which it was proper to give to the human figures. In the Theban tombs of the Empire, about 1500 B.C., we often find ourselves in the presence of unfinished paintings. The wall still bears a net-work of lines which cut one another at right angles (Fig. 66). The artists were accustomed to draw with great precision figures standing, seated, crouching on the ground, in attitudes of rest or in rapid movement. This arrangement of squares always conformed to the same laws of proportions : for a standing figure the sixth line, starting from the feet, fell exactly at the knees ; the upper part of the legs is at the ninth, the shoulders at the sixteenth.

Let us go back a thousand years ; tombs of the Middle Kingdom at Meir show us the same system (Fig. 67). More than a thousand years before, in tombs contemporary with the pyramids, we observe its constant application.



FIG. 66. (After W. Wreszinski.) NETWORK IN A THEBAN TOMB.

Even there where the artist, sufficiently sure of his hand, has contented himself with tracing the fundamental lines, we can easily see that these marks belong to the system whose characteristics we have just noticed (Fig. 68).

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Does it not seem that we thus catch a glimpse of something of the method by which the artists were trained? The young man apprenticed to a master must copy the good models until he can reproduce them mechanically. When he finds himself in front of a wall

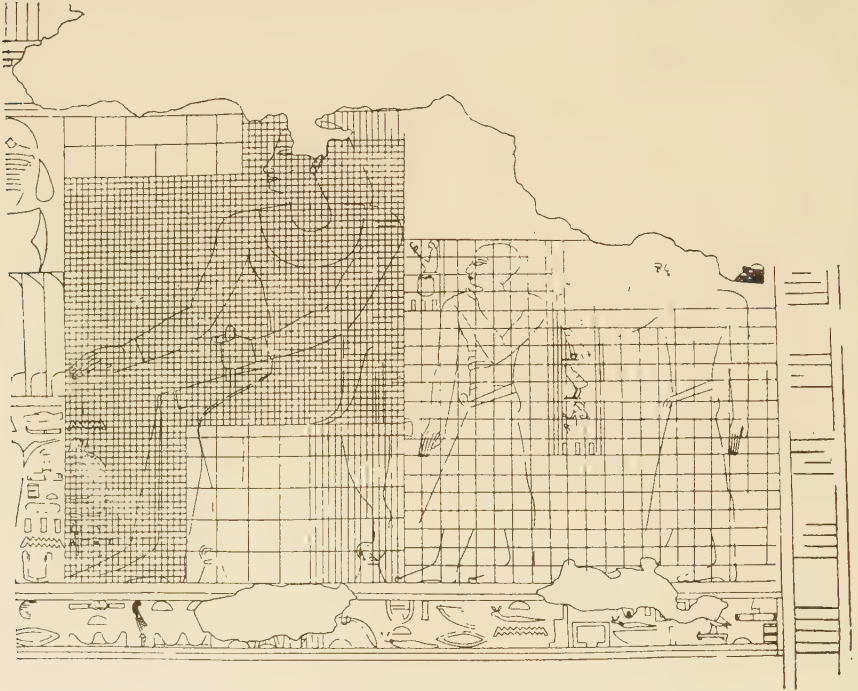


FIG. 67. (After A. M. Blackman.) NETWORK IN A TOMB AT MEIR.

and the subject to be treated is prescribed to him, he will no longer have to reflect. His drawing will be done automatically and by a gesture which almost participates in the nature of a reflex. It is only exceptionally that he will have recourse to the process of ruling the wall. It does not seem ever to have been met with in the royal tombs for the decoration of which recourse was had to the best artisans.

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A hall in the hypogeum of Sethi I was never completed, so that on the walls and on the pillars we notice marvellous sketches showing the method of working (Fig.69). These sketches are done with extraordinary sureness and yet the master-workman who was charged with the supervision of the gang of workers has come to do some retouching, here making a feature more exact, there slightly rectifying a movement.

The person who has not contented himself with throwing a hurried glance at this unfinished hall of the tomb of Sethi I, where so many other wonders attract our attention, but who, on the



FIG. 68.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

THE FUNDAMENTAL LINES.

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contrary, has stopped for a long time before these sketches, will never again dream of speaking of the inexperience of the Egyptian artists.

And when, in the tomb of a governor of Thebes of the name of Ramose, one succeeds in deciphering upon the rubbed and soiled wall the lines of the group of foreigners saluting Amenhotep IV (Fig. 70), whose ethnographical characters are rendered with marvellous simplification, one is seized, believe me, with a veritable joyous exaltation. We have discovered a superior beauty, we have grasped a perfection which excludes all possibility of improvement.

Is it necessary in addition to demonstrate to you that the Egyptians *could* have drawn otherwise? Need one bring you a proof that they rather avoided than were ignorant of perspective, as Champollion had already said so well? In the midst of scenes in which the greater number of the figures are drawn according to the laws of the system, we discover some which seem to ignore them completely. They are often what one might call accessory personages. The contrast is so great that the idea might occur to one that they were the work of several different artists if one came across them, separated from one another, in the pages of an album. See how, in the tomb of Rekhmara (Fig. 71), the slaves busy serving the great ladies of the family of the governor of Thebes are represented in a really astonishing variety of attitudes. No doubt is possible; it is the same brush, the same colour, the same hand which fixed successively upon the wall the figures of ladies with shoulders turned round and the girls drawn perfectly in profile and even three-quarters.

There is the same perfection in the figure of a slave arranging the ear-ring of a fashionable Theban lady in the tomb of Nakht (Fig. 72), greater perfection still, in that of



FIG. 69.

(After Beato.)

A MARVELLOUS SKETCH. TOMB OF SETHI I.

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FIG. 70.

(After Prisse d'Avennes.)

THE GROUP OF FOREIGNERS.

the young daughter of Mena, in a hunting scene (Fig. 32). The subject is well known. The deceased, accompanied by the members of his family, is devoting himself to the pleasure of the chase in the thickets of aquatic plants. He is on a light skiff made of papyrus. He is vigorously hurling a boomerang to stun and beat down the birds which are flying away at his approach. At the end of the boat, one of Mena's daughters is standing, laden with booty. In one hand she holds a few ducks by their wings; in the other lotus-flowers of which she has an ample supply. One of her sisters, of a tenderer age, for she is unclothed, has knelt down and is leaning over the water to grasp a bud. The body of the little girl is drawn with such perfection that one does not hesitate to declare that the artist who was the author of it had really nothing more to learn.

These are some of the problems raised by the study of



FIG. 71.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

THE SLAVES BUSY SERVING THE GREAT LADIES.

LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART

Egyptian art. You will have seen how far they are beyond the scope of purely archæological research. No more than the scholar who devotes himself to any special study whatever, has the Egyptologist the right to confine himself to observation pure and simple. It does not suffice to bring the ancient monuments out of the earth, to describe them, to determine their age; any more than the palæontologist has completed his task the day he has finished classifying all the fossils found in the geological strata.

On the contrary, it is precisely at this moment that the most interesting, the most important work is about to begin : the work of reflection, of meditation, of comparison, indispensable that each particular science may bring its contribution to " Science. "

In the history of art we find, in periods closer to our own, phenomena so complex that we might fear we shall never succeed in disentangling their elements. When we go further back into the past, there is a chance of discovering states of civilization such that we may hope to surprise precious secrets in them. It is precisely Egypt which, for a succession of centuries sufficiently long, affords us a considerable number of works of art the aim and genesis of which, as we have seen, we are able to study.

If the Egyptians when they carved and painted aimed above all at conciliating the gods, at insuring the happiness of their deceased relatives, and at protecting themselves from the terror of the hostile dead, they did not exhaust all artistic possibilities with these aims. We have seen how, by a sort of impulse, instinctive, indefinable, when they thought they were making only a useful thing, they were drawn on to desire to make it as beautiful as possible. We could also show how the technical processes which magic had caused to be invented were very early placed

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FIG. 72.

(After W. M. Fl. Petrie.)

THE SLAVE ARRANGING THE EAR-RING.

at the service of the industries in order to embellish the framework of daily existence.

It seems that one may compare the production of art to the full oscillation of a pendulum between two extreme points ; brutal utility and pure beauty. On the one hand, there are miserable savages whose life is nothing but a

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struggle against the hostile elements. On the other, we have to do with men who are the glory of humanity. At one of these points, there are discordant noises intended to put to flight evil spirits ; at the other, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. It is not a matter of indifference to discover, for a particular civilization, the exact position of the pendulum. In this respect, Egyptian art supplies us with precious elements of appreciation, which it alone, perhaps, is able to give us.

This is what was understood in a few of the great American museums the day their directors decided to give a particularly important place to the Art of Ancient Egypt.

THIRD LECTURE

Marvels of Industrial Art.

MARVELS OF INDUSTRIAL ART

ANYONE who listens to the reflections uttered by the public concerning the pieces of furniture found in the tomb of Tutankhamon, will soon perceive that the chief cause of astonishment proceeds from the perfection revealed by these works of industrial art. "We did not think that the Egyptians had reached such a remarkable degree of civilization!" I do not know what is the generally accepted conception of the stage of luxury and refinement of life reached by the ancient inhabitants of the Valley of the Nile. Not long ago, an English friend of mine, a specialist in the ethnology of the regions of the Upper Nile, wrote to ask me if I did not think that the Pharaohs might be compared with the petty kings of the Shilluks, or with those of any other tribe of North-East Africa. To be sincere, I had to answer that when I thought of the Thutmoses and the Amenhoteps of the XVIIIth Dynasty, I saw these powerful monarchs much more in the aspect of a Louis XIV than in that of a barbaric potentate.

I own that of all astonished persons I myself am the most astonished at the treasures revealed by Tutankhamon's tomb; but what astonished me most is that such works should have come down to us untouched; otherwise, at the risk of surprising you, I should have to say that they present nothing extraordinary. The man who, by a careful study of all the documents, has been able to picture to himself the framework of the life of those Pharaohs of the XVIIIth Dynasty is prepared to find it all normal. Nay, dare I say that one's admiration is

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somewhat mixed with a slight shade of disdain? Certain categories of works no longer display that perfect elegance, that sureness of touch which characterize much older specimens.



How are the industrial arts of Egypt to be studied? Would it be enough to review the numerous specimens preserved in the various museums? In so doing, we should probably get at least a general first impression, but one from which we should have to disengage ourselves at once. Industrial arts appear to be dominated by great currents of fashion, as forcible as those which mark the other arts, if not more so. At each great period, production assumes a sufficiently characteristic aspect to enable the archæologist, with a little practice, to ascribe unhesitatingly a date to whatever article comes into his hands, even without any indications as to its origin. Ceramics and earthenware show us a progression in the technical processes, an evolution of forms and of colouring. Moreover, at various periods, they present throughout the whole country characteristics of unity which can be explained only by the ruling influence of the capital which, at the same time, is the centre of artistic production. The improvements realized in the methods of excavating have enabled us to throw some light on these problems which had not occurred to anyone forty years ago. We are beginning to know with precision the details of the appearance of pottery of a determinate style. Limits are set for the use of a particular stone for the making of vases. The shape and the substance of the beads which compose a necklace are sometimes sufficient to determine the date of a tomb.

Without dwelling any longer on the import of these

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general questions, we will now review divers categories of documents which we possess independently of the real articles. You will probably wonder how one could come to know the industrial arts of an ancient people by consulting other sources than the products which have been preserved. Perhaps you are thinking of literary documents? As a matter of fact, it would not be difficult to find in the inscriptions numerous paragraphs about furniture and precious things of all kinds. The texts often describe them with particulars sufficiently precise to enable us to form a good idea of them. Were I to quote translations, you would be tempted to accuse the authors of the inscriptions of most oriental exaggerations. And it is certainly quite obvious in some cases. When, for instance, popular story-tellers describe a young prince travelling in his sedan-chair, there is no detail that is considered too extravagant to give the audience an impression of unheard-of luxury. If we had no other documents at our disposal, we might indeed always doubt their veracity.

But for ancient Egypt we possess other sources of information, extraordinarily abundant, the like of which no other civilization can boast : they are the innumerable bas-reliefs and paintings which cover the walls of the temples and tombs of the Nile Valley. There we shall find well known scenes illustrating the manufacture of household furniture, real inventories of treasures or paintings representing the offering of precious things to the gods and to the kings. It is just as if the Egyptians had wished to impress far-off posterity with definite proofs of their skill in the various crafts. Nothing, however, was farther from their thoughts, and other reasons explain this abundance of representations.

Let us begin with the scenes that we find in the tombs.

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I have not time to tell you with full particulars what the funeral beliefs of the Egyptians were. For clearness' sake, however, I must give you a few explanations concerning the fundamental ideas which formed the chief features of sepulchral decorations. It was believed that the departed, or, more accurately, his disembodied soul, continued to live inside the tomb, which was called " the house of eternity, " a life hardly different from life on earth. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that the survivors, desirous of protecting themselves against all possible attacks from the deceased, were trying to give the latter the illusion that he had not ceased to enjoy his belongings, that he was still surrounded with his usual furniture, and even that all care was taken to provide him with the necessities of life and to renew them according to his needs.

To give a clear example, let us say that it would not have done to place a few loaves, now and again, on the table of the deceased. These provisions being perishable, the Egyptians had gone so far as to represent on the walls the servants of the departed continually busy making fresh loaves. He who has never had the opportunity of examining attentively such paintings cannot imagine the precision and the minuteness that are to be found there. In effect, ploughing and sowing are first represented—then the harvest. The ears are transported and piled in stacks. A little farther on we are present at the threshing of the grain. When the oxen and donkeys have trampled it under foot to separate the grain from the chaff, the winnowers come and clean it. After all these preliminaries are over, the millers grind the flour and the bakers bake the loaves in the oven. All this goes on under the eye of the Master, who is thus assured that he will never want.

It is just the same when the manufacturing of household furniture is represented ; and that is why we can sur-



FIG. 75.

(After G. Steindorf.)

WORKSHOP OF THOTH

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WORKSHOP OF REKHMARA.

(After W. Wierszinski.)

FIG. 74.

prise the Egyptian artisans at their work. Let us, for instance, enter the workshop of Ti, as it is carved on the walls of his tomb at Sakkara (Fig. 73). We see two men leaning over a bed and beside them are several carpenters busy sawing boards or working with hammer and chisel. The Egyptians were very particular about the representation of such scenes and they took care to provide the personages with inscriptions explaining their meaning. This scene is called : " Polishing of the ebony bed by the ' seshep ' in the house of eternity. " The same word " seshep " is repeated over the head of one of the workers and consequently we may affirm that it indicates the specialist charged with polishing. Notice the shape of the feet of the bed, which are exactly reproduced in one of



FIG. 75.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

WORKSHOP IN THE TEMPLE OF AMON.

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the signs of the inscription ; you will see clearly that the idea was to reproduce the paws of an animal. One more detail : we have not to translate the word which indicates what wood the bed was made of, for we shall go on calling it ebony, as did the Egyptians. The deceased is assured that the workmen are busy making his funerary furniture.

In other places we find similar scenes the presence of which in the tombs must be explained in another way. When the departed had filled the post of a director, or inspector, or foreman of the workshop, at the temple of Amon, for example, good care was taken to represent him fulfilling his charge. It was a way of allowing him to go on performing his professional duties for ever ! Here is a scene from the tomb of Rekhmara, the governor of Thebes at the time of Thutmose III. It is interesting to find here workmen busy making two pieces of furniture very like the specimens found in Tutankhamon's tomb (Fig. 74). On the left, they are constructing a huge catafalque adorned with amulets of Osiris and of Isis ; on the right, two workmen are boring a hole in a bedstead which is adorned with the head of a lion and with feet in the shape of the lion's paws. The tool they are using is a drill set in motion by means of a bow.

Now I should like to call your attention to another painting which introduces us to that part of Amon's temple where the artists were working. In a small room (Fig. 75) on the left a painter is busy putting the last touches to a statue. At the side, we can see the mask of a mummy and some small figures already finished. A little way off a sculptor is carving a statue obviously made of wood ; behind him two craftsmen are wielding a curious apparatus. It is perhaps a means for drilling holes in several stone beads at once. It is composed of several sticks set in motion by means of a bow.

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CONSTRUCTION OF TABERNACLES.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

FIG. 76.

Scenes of the same kind sometimes show us the manufacturing of complicated pieces of furniture of which no actual specimens have yet been found (Fig. 76). Such is the case in the tomb of Ipui, one of the contemporaries of Ramses II. A group of workmen are crowding round tabernacles ornamented with elaborate symbolical patterns. While some of the workers, following the directions of an old foreman, are busily engaged in their task, a sluggard lounging on the roof of one of the tabernacles is being violently shaken by an overseer who has found him out.

In other places the paintings give

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FIG. 77.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

GOLDSMITH'S WORK AND SHOW WEAPONS.

us real inventories of valuable pieces of work. These are to be found in the tombs of the people whose



FIG. 76.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

PRESENTATION OF BOOTY TO THE GODS.

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business it was to make them or who were simply entrusted with their custody. Thus we have a remarkable series of goldsmith's work and of show weapons in the tomb of Thanuny, contemporary of Thutmose IV (Fig. 77). You will notice especially, on the lower part of the painting, a beautiful cup the two handles of which are formed by antelope heads; a bouquet of flowers made of precious metal comes out of the centre. Such a piece of handiwork has never been found in the excavations. Thanks to these representations, we can form an idea of the splendour of the ornaments which were used to decorate the palaces of the kings and the temples of the gods. There is another instance borrowed from a tomb of the same period, in the middle of the XVIIIth Dynasty (Fig. 79). Here there are vases of embossed and chiselled gold, adorned with flowers, birds and heads of antelopes. The stopper of one of them is surmounted by the entire figure of an antelope lying down. Allow me to remind you that in Tutankhamon's catafalque the discovery has been made of a vase the lid of which is adorned with a lion's whelp.

When the victorious kings came back from their military expeditions, they used to take part of the booty and have it turned into beautiful works of art to be offered to the gods. On one of the outer walls of the hypostyle hall of Karnak (Fig. 78), we see Sethi I presenting the gods of the Theban triad Amon, Mut and Khonsu, with wonderful vases made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, malachite, and precious stones of all kinds. A similar scene in the same temple is provided with an inscription from which we learn that the gold plate had been made following the heart's desire of His Majesty.

In the Theban tombs we can frequently see the presen-

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FIG. 79.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

VASES OF EMBOSSED AND CHISELLED GOLD.

tation of the tribute brought by the vanquished. The Governor Rekhmara, for instance, had introduced to his master Thutmose III, the delegations from the inhabitants of Punt, Crete, Nubia, and Syria. Some of them carry raw material, gold dust and solid gold, frankincense, ostrich eggs and feathers, ebony, elephants' tusks and panther skins, destined to be

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manufactured. The "Keftyw" or Cretans mostly brought manufactured goods. Some of them remind us of specimens found in the excavations of the principal sites of the civilization known as "Minoan." The cornet-bearer has his replica in a fresco in the palace of Cnossos.

The tomb of a viceroy of Nubia, in the reign of Tutankhamon, shows us Huy receiving the tribute of the peoples of the South (Fig. 80). Princes and princesses from the Sudan, prostrate before the king, beseech him to grant them his favour. Judging by the paintings, we might be led to suppose that some of the beautiful furniture of Tutankhamon had been made in the regions of the Upper Nile. But that would be a mistake; it is more likely that the Egyptian painter simply wanted to show that the precious objects represented in this scene had been executed in Egypt with the raw material offered by tributaries.

Before leaving the examination of works of decorative art represented in painting or in bas-relief, I should like to call your attention to a group of vases of a simple and ordinary appearance. We find them in a scene representing a banquet in the tomb of Nakht (Fig. 81). They have been placed side by side on a mat; three of them are placed on light stands; two bunches of grapes fill the intervals; over them we see lotus flowers, some of them bound in a most ingenious fashion. This is only a fragment of an elaborate scene, but the harmonious arrangement of the details is an obvious proof of the delicacy and the refinement of the Thebans.

Let us now consider another category of documents. I shall call them the imitated articles—perhaps I ought to say the forgeries. It is a question of understanding one another about the sense of that expression. Such articles might be best compared with theatrical accessories. All



FIG. 80.

(After R. Lepsius.)

THE RECEPTION OF THE TRIBUTE
OF THE SOUTH.



FIG. 81.

(After N. de G. Davies.)

GROUP OF VASES.

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the luxury, all the splendour of our operatic kings is meant to create illusion while incurring the least possible expense in the staging. I have said before that one of the objects of the Egyptians was to give the deceased the happy illusion that he had taken away with him all his goods and chattels. But, side by side with the well-being of the dead, there existed, in conflict with it, the cupidity of the living, desirous to keep as much as possible of the inheritance.

Wonders have been worked to conciliate fear of the departed and filial piety with the set purpose of going to the least possible expense. Why put golden vases, inlaid with coloured stones, in the temple of King Neferirkere's pyramid if

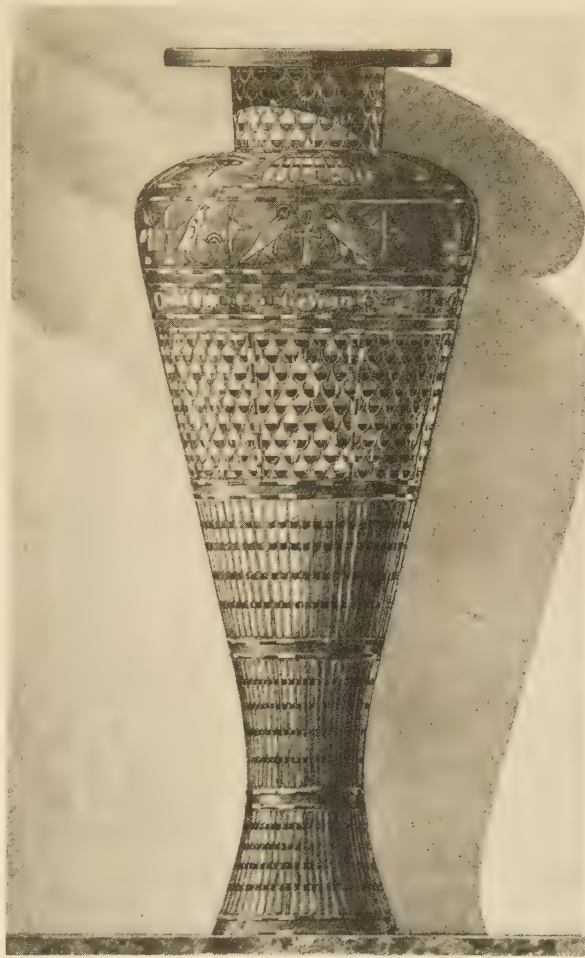


FIG. 82.

(After L. Borchardt.)

DUMMY VASE FROM NEFERIRKERE'S TEMPLE.

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FIG. 83. (After Th. M. Davis.) PLASTER COPIES OF PRECIOUS VASES.

one is certain that the departed Pharaoh will be just as well satisfied with wooden vases inlaid with enamel? We no longer possess the originals, but these funerary (Fig. 82) facsimiles are enough to show us the luxury of the royal plate of that period. In a tomb at Tell el-Amarna there is a representation of a feast given by Amenhotep IV on the occasion of his mother Tiye's visit to the new capital. The Asiatic tributaries presented him with precious vases. We may suppose that Amenhotep IV offered them to his mother in remembrance of the feast. This would explain why plaster copies of the same vases were found in the tomb of Iuiya and Tuiyou (Fig. 83); Tiye would have had replicas made in order to put them in her parents' sepulchre.

The pieces of furniture found in the tombs are often of extraordinary fragility and some of them could never have



FIG. 84.

(After Jean Capart.)

CHAIR OF SENEDJEM.

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FIG. 85. (After Jean Capart.) PAINTED CHEST OF SENEDJEM.

resisted usage. Such is the case of a chair found in Senedjem's tomb; it is made of white wood, but it has been painted all over as if it were a richly inlaid piece of furniture with a back made of panels (Fig. 84). The seat of the original must have been covered with tapestry of various colours, but here the workmen simply imitated it with coarse material covered with a layer of plaster on



Pl. 80.

(After H. Burton.)

HAWK BEARING THE SOLAR DISK.

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which a pattern with bunches of grapes had been painted. The same may be said of a small chest belonging to this tomb (Fig. 85). It is made of common wood, but its painting represents marquetry and woods of various kinds inlaid with ivory.

We may now wonder whether many of the pieces of furniture found in Tutankhamon's tomb are only funerary copies. These magnificent golden chariots, for instance, are they the very chariots used by the king for driving, hunting, or going to war? I think I may bring forward an argument to support the theory that they are only facsimiles. An ornament of the pole, composed of a hawk bearing the solar disk on its head, has been found (Fig. 86). We know it is the figure of a divinity. What is exceptional in this instance is that the disk is not plain but covered with hieroglyphics forming the name of the king. I think it is a perfect illustration of the usual description by the Egyptians of the death of their kings: "His Majesty has flown to heaven and has united himself with the solar disk; the divine members have been absorbed by him who had created them." Such a symbol would not find its place on the chariot of a living king.

I have only been able to show you briefly the great series of documents whose study may help us to know the industrial arts, independently of the actual articles found in the excavations. It is easy to understand that the investigator who considered only the latter would singularly limit the field of his observations. We may now examine a selection of specimens of various kinds.

Let us first look at a few pieces of furniture. We have seen workmen busy making bedsteads the feet of which imitate animals' paws (Fig. 73). This is a quite old Egyptian shape, the royal tombs of the 1st Dynasty having

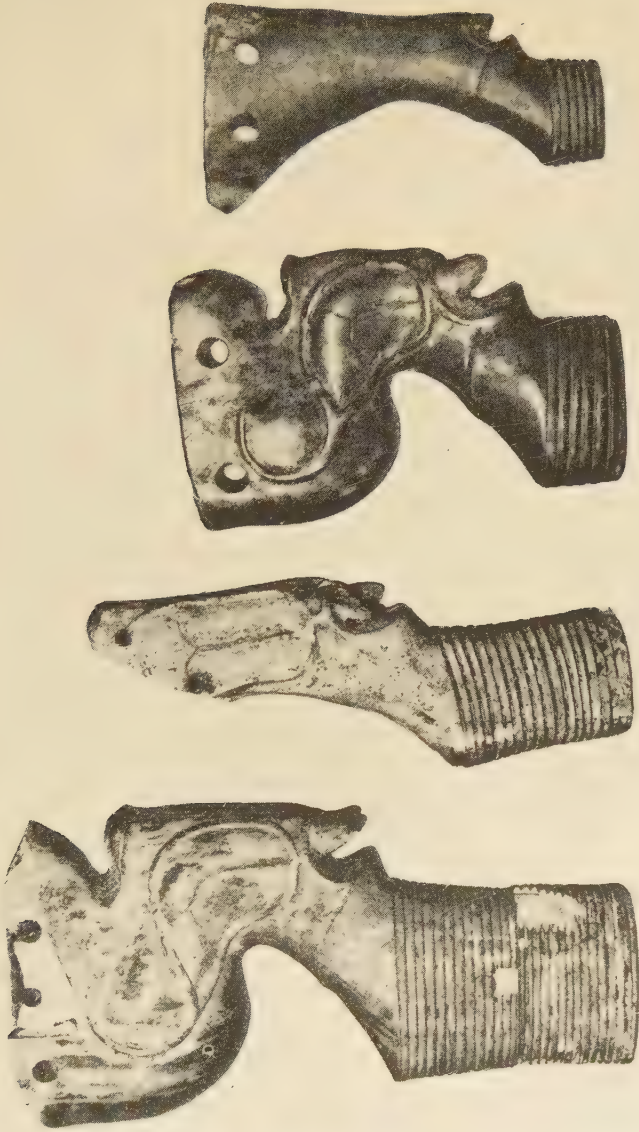


FIG. 87.

(After Amélineau.)

IVORY PIECES OF FURNITURE.

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already shown us remarkable specimens of that adaptation of a natural model to a decorative end (Fig. 87). It is probable that it originally contained a symbolic meaning, but we cannot explain it now. We have before our eyes one of those forms which, once they have been introduced in art, are transmitted from generation to generation for thousands of years, pass from one country to another, survive the destruction of civilizations, and are still used nowadays. The prototype is sometimes the foot of an ox or an antelope; oftener a lion's paw.

In a bed which belonged to Queen Tiye's parents (Fig. 182), the animals' feet seem to give far more suppleness to the whole piece of furniture than vertical supports ever could. It is to be noted that the bed has a sense of direction indicated by the fore-paws and the hind-paws of the lion. The panel at the foot of the bed was ornamented with figures of divinities whose mission it was to protect the sleeper against evil influences. These divinities are the god Bes and the goddess Tueris whose cut-out images also adorn the back of a remarkable armchair (Fig. 183). The arms have received interesting decoration which, perhaps, is not entirely determined by religious motives. There are also protective amulets disposed over a sign which suggested the image of the god of evil to the Egyptian mind. The principal model, however, is formed by a kneeling antelope; the empty space over its croup is filled up with floral decorations.

These are undoubtedly handsome pieces of furniture, worthy of a royal palace; nevertheless, they look almost insignificant when compared with the armchair found in Tutankhamon's tomb (Fig. 88). You do not expect me to describe it to you; no doubt others have done so—but it seems impossible for me to speak about the master-

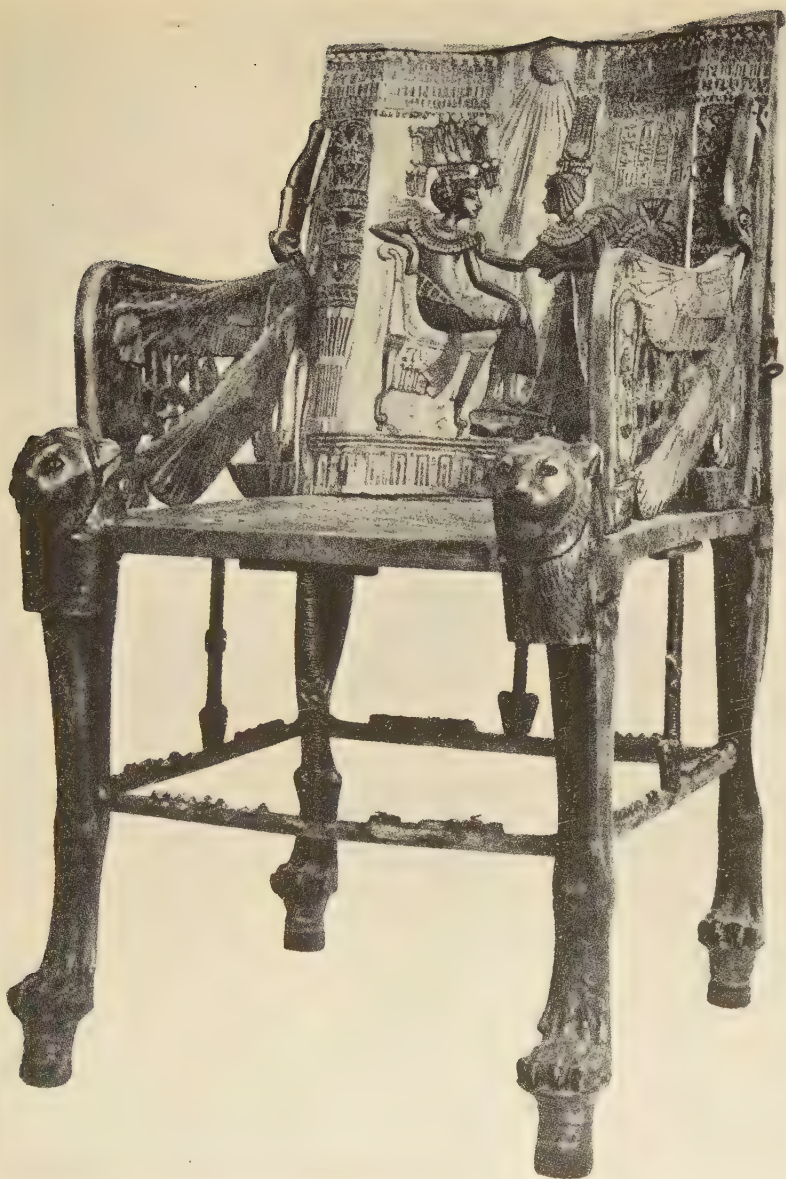


FIG. 88.

(After H. Burton.)

ARMCHAIR OF TUTANKHAMON.

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FIG. 89.

(After Jean Capart.)

IVORY PANELS.

pieces of the industrial art of Ancient Egypt without mentioning that peerless specimen.

When the joiners did not give the shape of animals' paws to the furniture, they invented a system of joining, very light in appearance but which, nevertheless, ensured the solidity of the article of furniture. A jewel case, bearing the name of Amenhotep III, provides us with an excellent instance of this (Fig. 180). We should like to see the little chest, some ivory panels of which formerly belonged to the MacGregor Collection (Fig. 89). They are delicate

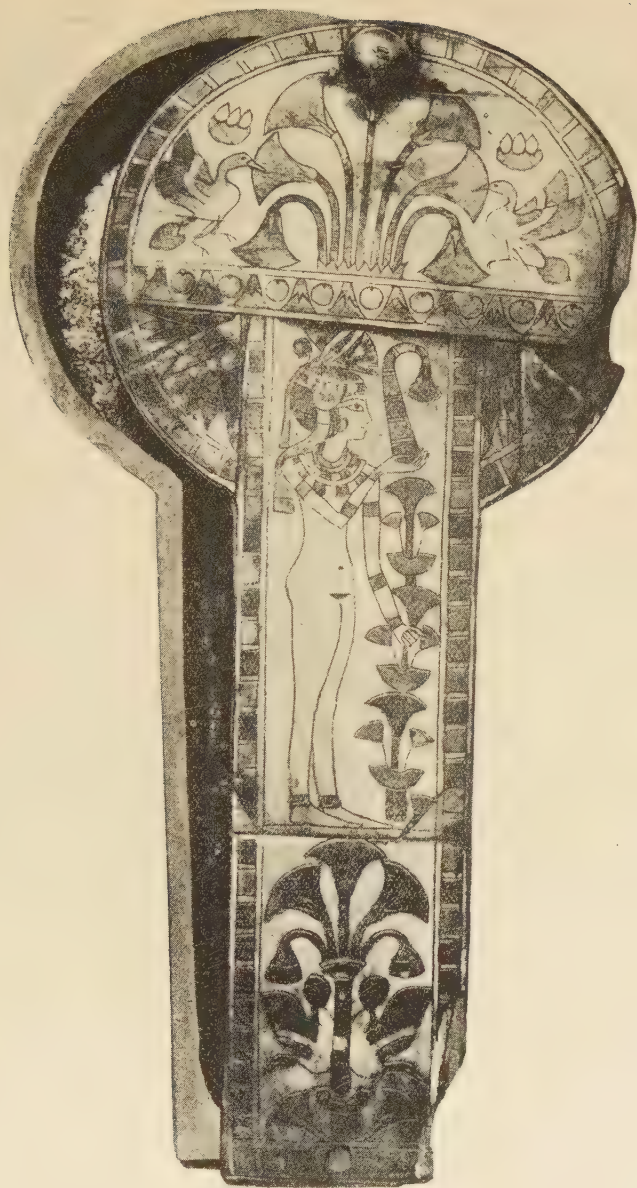


FIG. 90.

(After E. Brugsch.)
MIRROR CASE OF QUEEN HENIT-TAUL.

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bas-reliefs representing people bearing offerings. The style is of a purity which reminds us of the best figures of the Old Kingdom. Nevertheless, it has been ascertained that they are imitations dating from the Saïte period.

The elegant Egyptian ladies liked to use polished metal disks as mirrors. These mirrors were generally kept in a case, sometimes in a box. When the mummy of Queen Henit-Taui of the XXIst Dynasty was unwrapped in Cairo, a marvellous mirror case was found on her breast. It was covered with ivory plates, engraved and painted (Fig. 90). It is certainly an article which bears witness to the most exquisite taste.

Now and again small cylindrical boxes have been found in the tombs of the Empire (Fig. 91). One panel and the lid are decorated with hunting scenes; a dog or a feline is leaping on to the back of an ox or an antelope. In the incisions there are often traces of coloured paste.

When we are busy grouping these lovely pieces of work in the museums, we feel inclined to give less importance to the great monuments which generally occur to us whenever Egyptian art is spoken of. It is quite certain that we must not judge the whole production of ancient artists according to the same principles. On the one side there is traditional art, essentially bound up with religion and funeral rites. The principal object of the sculptor and of the painter is not to combine ingeniously new forms, to produce beauty in order to please; they must first of all follow directions consecrated by the experience of hundreds of years. All that is asked of them is to manage in such a way that the gods may be pleased with the living and that the departed may rest in peace in their tombs. It is the king's duty to see that the tradition is not disregarded. An inscription shows us how a Pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom has remedied the inefficiency of the



FIG. 91.

(After Jean Capart.)

CYLINDRICAL BOXES.

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artists of his time. The text tells us of the deliberation between the king and his counsellors who advise him to investigate in the sacerdotal libraries. The Pharaoh goes from town to town, orders the old books to be produced, examines the shapes given to the gods, and instructs the artists never to deviate from these.

Under such conditions, it is no wonder if the great monuments of Egyptian art often seem monotonous. But these constitute only a part of it. In the industrial arts, the artist was fettered in no such way and we have just seen several specimens in which the character of utility comes second. To preserve Queen Henit-Tauti's mirror, it was obviously not necessary to make such an artistic case.

In a similar instance the craftsman who imagined a new shape certainly hoped to be rewarded for his ingenuity or, at least, to be praised for his skill and talent. We witness here the birth of feelings which will stimulate an ever richer and more varied production of art. As long as good taste remains unwavering, the artist-craftsmen will produce little marvels. Thus we shall explain the appearance, during the XVIIIth and XIXth Dynasties, of these lovely wooden spoons, of which a hundred varieties are known, scattered all over the museums of the world. If anyone were to show them in one work, he would raise to Egyptian art a monument worthy of any Colossus or any Pyramid. Three of these spoons will be enough to convince you (Fig. 92) : the first of them shows us a young girl wandering about amidst shrubs and plants, the majority of which are of a type botanists have not yet discovered—they are really lotus-plants whose flowers rise as high above the water as the papyrus. This little scene, done entirely in openwork, would have been difficult to fasten to the cavity destined to hold the cosmetic.

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FIG. 92. (After Burlington F.-A. Club Exhibition.) PERFUME-SPOONS.

That is why they put between the two a double bouquet of lotus flowers. But, by this very fact, the oval cavity, the bunch of lotus flowers and the young girl's body put one in mind of the hieroglyphic meaning the word "life." The spoon has thus become a veritable charm. In the third one the part we shall call the handle is adorned with two symmetrical figures of the god Bes, standing face to face and holding a sheaf of papyrus in bloom. These two remarkable specimens belong to University College, London.

The second has been recently discovered and is preserved in the Museum at Copenhagen. Its composition is of a

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bold character and the artist has rendered with surprising ability the movement of the slave's hips, as she is in the act of lifting a too heavy load. The sureness and correctness of the drawing are remarkable and without doubt reveal the hand of a master who, at times, let his brush stray over the leaf of a papyrus or over a piece of limestone, trying to reproduce on them all the variety of movement of the persons he saw passing before his eyes, and without any regard to the traditions of the art studio.

It is interesting to note that when a figure of this kind appeared, it caused the greatest emulation among the artists. That is why we see so many varieties of the same type at the same epoch. The study of the carrier is taken up, with slight differences depending on the age or the sex of the slave, sometimes even on his ethnographical type. For example, in the Liverpool Museum, we find a figure representing an old slave, advancing painfully and carrying a large vase on his shoulder (Fig. 20). This is only a receptacle intended to hold some cosmetic, but without doubt the artist considered its useful character to be merely secondary; and thus we see that,—very differently from what is the case at the present day—it was in the industrial department that talent had most opportunity of asserting itself. It will be a long time before inventions intended for the use of fashionable people become models for high-class sculpture.

If we now pass from wood carving to metal work, we shall notice the excellence of the technique.

I have had occasion to show you, in the first part of this lecture, models of festal vases, several of which were decorated with figures of animals. I then told you that no work of this kind had as yet come into our hands. In every era, the search for precious metals has been followed up with the greatest activity. Still, by an exceptional

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piece of good-luck, a small vase was found in the Delta, probably in the hiding place of a metal beater (Fig. 177). It is not one of those luxurious objects offered to the temples, but most likely the property of some princess. The vase proper is made of silver, the bowl is decorated with figures embossed and retouched with the chisel. The handle is a real marvel; it takes the shape of a small goat, standing on its hind feet and seemingly drinking some



FIG. 93.

(After E. Brugsch.)

BRONZE CUP OF HATAL.

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FIG. 94. (After J. de Morgan.)
PECTORAL FROM DAHSHUR.

of the liquid contained in the vase. The animal is made of gold and the general movement of its body, as well as the modelling, shows it to be the work of an artist who has nothing more to learn from a master. On the collar, under the oxidation, traces of decoration can be seen.

The technical work of engraved metal dishes, so much in vogue in the East, seems to us to have been very highly developed at the epoch of the Empire. The tomb of a personage called Hatai has furnished a most remarkable bronze cup to the Museum in Cairo (Fig. 93). An embossment marks the centre of a very complicated scene which takes up nearly the whole space in the middle of the cup. On a background of full-blown papyrus, amidst which appear birds pursued by rodents, we see figures of cattle. We can distinguish a bull and two cows with their calves; one of them is turning round to lick its little one, the other is busy drinking. Suddenly, in the midst of this pastoral scene, a lion appears and springs on to the back of a second bull who sinks crushed beneath the weight of its enemy. Many



FIG. 95. (After J. de Morgan.)
PECTORAL FROM DAHSHUR.

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centuries later, the Phœnicians will spread clumsy imitations of these exquisite Egyptian cups all over the Mediterranean coast.

The metal workers also made the arms, axes, and daggers destined for the triumphant armies of the Pharaohs.

Excellent bronze blades have often been found in these ancient tombs. The works of the Egyptian armourers were a cause of envy to most foreigners. When Queen Hatshepsut sent an expedition to Punt, her envoys took with them axes and daggers to give in exchange for the native products. Everyone has heard of the exquisite inlaid arms discovered at Mycene. A problem which has yet to be solved is how much of their work is owing to the influence of the Egyptian School. It has been remarked that one of the blades has, in the middle of its inlaid decoration, the figure of a cat chasing some geese in the centre of a landscape which shows us lotus-flowers.

In the tomb of a queen of the XVIIth Dynasty there has been found a dagger on the blade of which is represented a lion chasing a bull (Fig. 170). The handle which is terminated by four female heads is decorated all over with inlaid work. This is evidently a weapon used on state



FIG. 96.

(After J. de Morgan.)

PECTORAL FROM DAHSHUR.

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occasions and a close examination of it gives us some idea of the royal luxury. It is to be remarked that the inscriptions on it show that it belonged to an Ahmose of the XVIIth Dynasty at the time when the Egyptian princes were engaged in a war of independence against the Hyksos, who then occupied the greater part of the lower valley of the Nile. This means that, owing to troubled times, it would not be surprising if we detected imperfections in the details.

In order to understand how perfect the metal work was, I have only to draw your attention to the jewellery of the XIIth Dynasty. I would defy the severest critic to find fault with it. Let us take, as an instance, one of the pectorals discovered at Illahun (Fig. 184). I have especially chosen an example from the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

As regards composition, it would be difficult to mention a more perfectly harmonious specimen. In the centre is a royal cartouche bearing the three hieroglyphics forming the name of Sesostris II. The shield rests on two palms held up by a seated genius. This means Eternity. Hanging from the right arm of the genius is the picture of a tadpole, which in the hieroglyphics means hundreds of thousands. To the right and to the left are hawks, which are considered as the embodiment of Horus, the god of royalty. On their heads is placed the solar disk enveloped in the folds of the cobra, which represents the protecting goddesses of Upper and Lower Egypt. The sacred birds insert one of their claws in the sign of the seal, while the other rests on one of the palms held up by the genius. Two crosses of life in the loop of which passes the body of the serpent complete the details of the picture. The goldsmith has shown himself to be as great an artist as the designer. The jewel is wrought on a golden leaf on which is soldered

MARVELS OF INDUSTRIAL ART

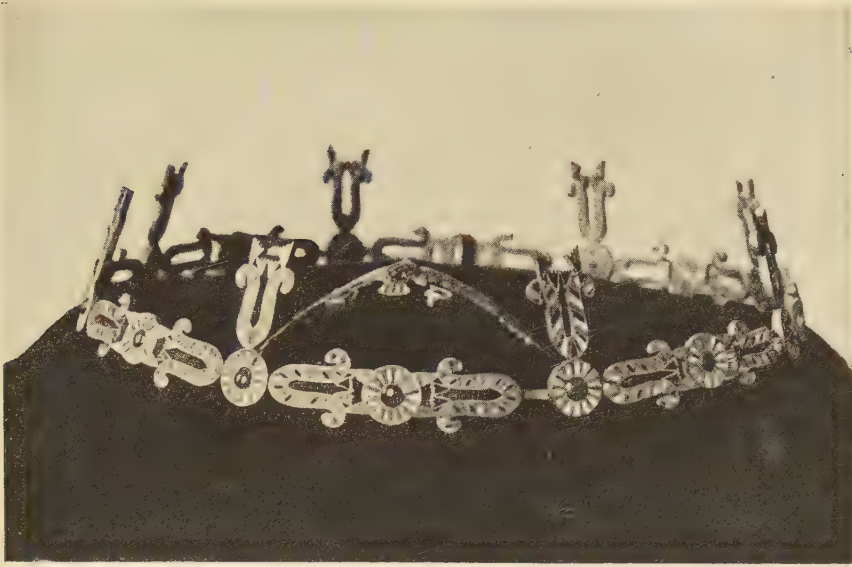


FIG. 97. (After J. de Morgan.) PRINCELY JEWEL FROM DAHSHUR.

a network of little partitions. Between these coloured stones have been inserted with the utmost precision.

The Museum of Cairo possesses three marvellous pectorals of the same epoch, discovered at Dahshur (Figs. 94-96). On the photos that I am showing you, we see the reverse side. You will note that the golden open-work plate has been chiselled and modelled in such a way that the part of the jewel which was not visible when it was worn is just as beautiful as the other.

These discoveries of jewels in the princely tombs of the Middle Kingdom have brought to light many varieties of ornaments (Fig. 97). See how chaste is the work of this simple gold band in the centre of which rises the sacred serpent (Fig. 98). Roses of excellent design are fixed at intervals. Golden ribbons of a rather stiff character hang



FIG. 98.

(After G. Brunton.)

CROWN FROM ILLAHUN.

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down near the ears and on the back of the neck. The only thing that seems strange in this piece of jewellery is the bunch of papyrus surmounted by two high feathers and fixed at the back of the band. In the tombs of Dahshur were found necklaces made up of an infinite number of amulets and hieroglyphic signs (Fig. 100), combined or



FIG. 99. (After Mace & Winlock.) NECKLACE OF SENEBTISI.

simple, expressing good wishes, made of gold and inlaid with coloured stones. In the upper part of the photograph which shows some of them, two magnificent hawks' heads, marvellously worked, can be seen. They are the two ends of a large necklace which was worn spread over the chest. A good specimen can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Fig. 99); it was found in the tomb of the Lady Senebtisi at Lisht.



FIG. 100. (After E. Brugsch.) AMULETS FROM DAHSHUR.

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When a person wished to present an offering to the temples, and could not afford luxurious vases in gold or silver, he offered pieces of earthenware. In certain places explorers who were opening up the approaches to the sanctuary of the goddess Hathor at Dêr el-Bahri came across regular mounds of broken pieces of enamelled ware.

We have all seen, in one or another of the museums, some of these Egyptian objects, made of clay baked by fire and covered with a vitrified coating, the colour of which varies, according to the epoch, between blue and green. The blue has a most brilliant gloss, so brilliant that it is usual to call it by the characteristic name of "Egyptian blue." Already, in the prehistoric tombs of Upper Egypt, necklaces made of enamelled beads have been found. The royal tombs of the Ist Dynaſty have given vases, some of which show us that, even at that remote period, coloured enamels were in use. The invention of this industry will be found to coincide with that of the metallurgy of copper. Metallic oxides with a copper base gave the brilliant colouring to the vitrified layer.

In course of time, as the methods became more perfect, we notice an increase in the number of colours used. During the Empire perfection is reached and the earthenware makers become more and more daring in their achievements. Amongst the ruins of the temples and the palaces have been found little multicoloured enamelled panels, representing foreign prisoners whose ethnographical characteristics and peculiarity of clothing are rendered to perfection. Here again the Egyptians have taken the lead and it is no exaggeration to say that at no epoch and in no country have they ever been surpassed. As I cannot go into a close study of all the details of this industry, it

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FIG. 101.

(After H. Wallis.)

ENAMELLED CHALICES.

will be sufficient for me to show you, as examples, two magnificent chalices in blue enamel that belonged to the famous MacGregor Collection (Fig. 101).

The day that a workman conceived the idea of treating separately the vitrifiable matter used for enamelling, he discovered the glass industry. Again the Empire shows us this industry at its culminating point. The glass paste was used for making opaque vases decorated with multicoloured patterns. In the royal tombs at Thebes have been found the remains of delicately shaped inlaid phials bearing the names of the Pharaohs for whom they were made. In the

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excavations of Tell el-Amarna, English explorers discovered, a short time ago, remarkable vases made of polychrome glass, one of them shaped like a fish (Figs. 102 and 103).

It would not be logical to think that men who possessed articles showing such highly developed taste would have been content to live in dwellings devoid of both charm and beauty. We know that the architects made a constant

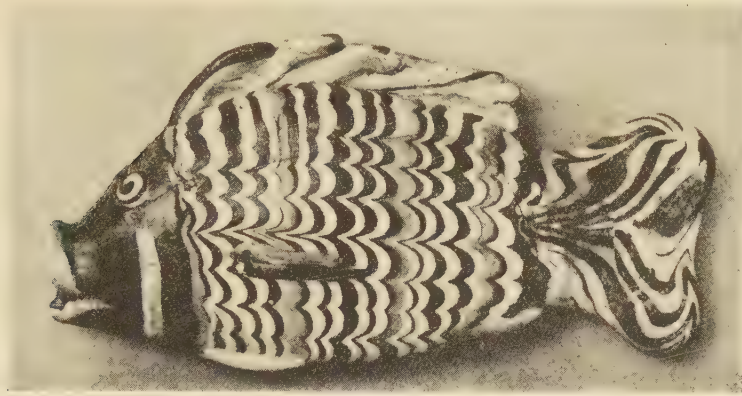


FIG. 102.

(After T. E. Peet.)

FISH-SHAPED VASE.

use of unbaked bricks and wood in the construction of their palaces and houses. Thus it is that, after so many thousands of years, we so seldom find remains of such buildings. When we want to reconstruct the framework of the familiar life of the ancient Egyptians, we have to gather documents which have often reached us in a very fragmentary condition. They are sometimes pieces of plaster-work, still bearing traces of different colours.

At Tell el-Amarna, Petrie discovered one day a large painted pavement in a sufficiently good state of preservation for us to judge of its pristine beauty. Unfortunately, it was left on the spot and although strict measures were taken

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to preserve it, it was almost entirely destroyed through the stupid malignity of an Arab. The Museum of Cairo now possesses a reconstruction of this pavement in which were utilized, as far as possible, all the pieces left of the



FIG. 103. (After T. E. Peet.)
GLASS VASE FROM EL-AMARNA.

original after this wanton act of vandalism. The middle is painted to imitate a lake covered with flowers and alive with fishes and aquatic birds. All around are bushes of different kinds of plants in the midst of which young calves are disporting themselves (Fig. 104). Above, birds and insects are flying about. What principally strikes us in this painting is its general character of lightness and ease. It is hard to realize that it is the work of men who died over three thousand years ago. Try to imagine a hall entirely paved in such a manner, its walls covered with little pictures representing *genre* scenes. Garlands of conventionally treated flowers,

predominant among which is the lotus, hang high on the upper part just under the ceiling (Fig. 105). As they were constantly painted in the tombs, in order to reconstruct for the dead the framework of their every-day life during their terrestrial existence, we have thus become acquainted with numerous varieties which otherwise we should not have known. It also seems that the Egyptians

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often used as decorations stuffs and mats adorned with various patterns. None have come down to us and, here again, we have only copies of them made on the walls and ceilings of the sepulchres. The necropolis of Thebes has preserved a most interesting series of them. But it would be a mistake

to think that their usage dates only from the Empire. Examples of them have been found in much more ancient periods. Among others we see the decorative painting surrounding the niche of a statue in a tomb at



FIG. 104.

(After W. M. Fl. Petrie.)

PAVEMENT OF TELL EL-AMARNA.

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FIG. 105.

(After G. Jéquier.)

THEBAN FRIEZES.

Meir, dating from the Middle Kingdom (Fig. 106). There we find spirals used and the pattern is simple enough. But here are others, much more complicated, dating from

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FIG. 106. (After A. M. Blackman.) DECORATIVE PATTERN FROM MEIR.

the Empire (Figs. 107-108). The spirals are more developed and interlaced in a continuous pattern in such a manner as to form a frame for bulls' heads bearing a rose between

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FIG. 107.

(After Prisse d'Avennes.)

DECORATION OF CEILINGS.

their horns. You will be surprised to note that the painting is ornamented with a pattern which brings to our minds the shape of the Ionic column, such as the Greeks used many centuries later.

As an example of hangings, I must show you a tent made of cut-out leather, used at the funeral of Princess Isimkheb, the daughter of Pinedjem I of the XXIst Dynasty, which is now preserved in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 109). We are somewhat surprised to find once

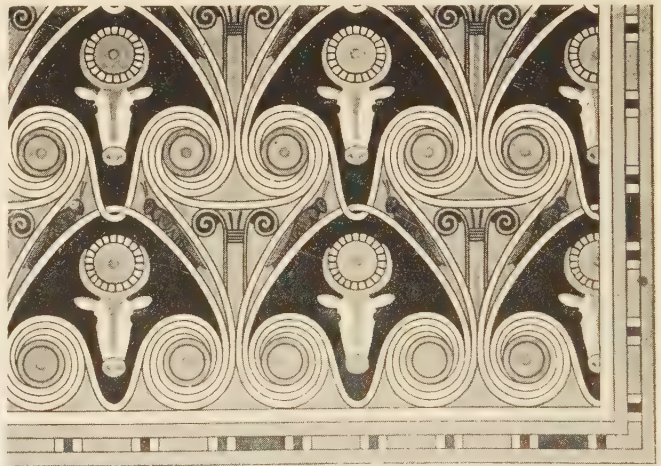


FIG. 108.

(After Prisse d'Avennes.)

DECORATION OF CEILINGS.

MARVELS OF INDUSTRIAL ART

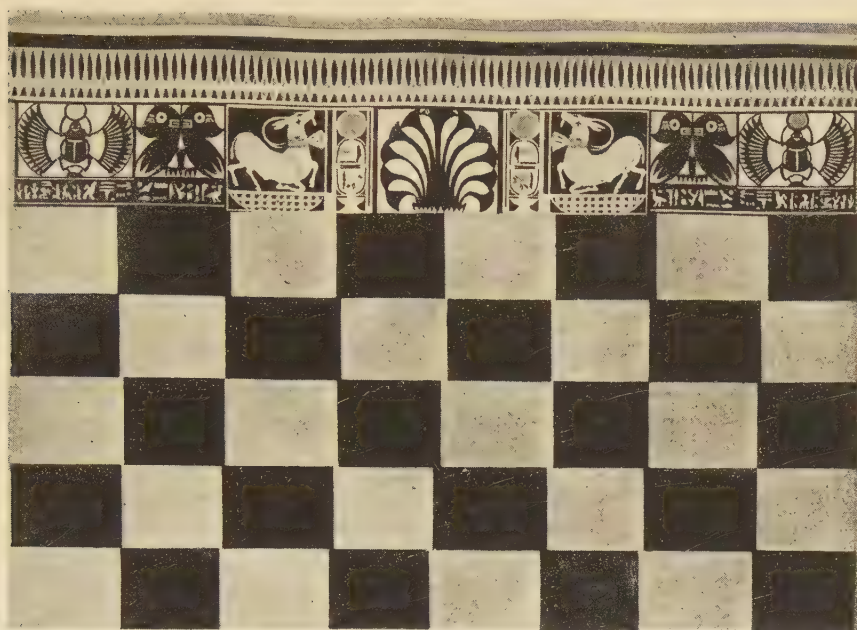


FIG. 109. (After E. Brugsch.) FUNERAL TENT OF ISIMKHEB.

more the model of the kneeling antelope which we noticed on one of the armchairs in the tomb of Queen Tiye's parents. We rather wonder if this image had a symbolical meaning which we do not understand.

During the short time at my disposal I have wanted to show you the principal productions of the artist-craftsmen of Ancient Egypt. You have seen that they were in no way inferior to the great architects or the great sculptors of the Valley of the Nile. I have told you why it is even allowable to think that they often surpassed them by the fertility of their inventions and their liberty in the pursuit of new models. It will always be difficult, if not impossible, to determine who began to transform articles of pure utility in such a way that they became

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works of art. Was it the master who gave directions to his workmen? Was it, on the contrary, the workman, gifted with imagination, who made his master accept a new model? Undoubtedly the two classes, producers and buyers, constantly act and react on each other at all times. We may affirm that the more developed a civilization is, the more intense is the desire of giving to articles of utility, varied, elegant and graceful forms.

Production in series, which is a result of machine-made work, has brought about a sad degeneration from the artistic point of view. A reaction is making itself felt everywhere, and I hope that the specimens of Egyptian art which have been shown to you will have convinced you that the study of Pharaonic art is calculated to render important service in the work of the regeneration of modern taste.

FOURTH LECTURE

The Ruins of Thebes.

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WHAT traveller, visiting the city of the Cæsars, has not paused, as night was falling, on the terrace overlooking the Forum? His eyes dwell upon this ensemble of monuments, each one of which recalls an incident in the History of Rome. Every stone is, so to say, full of significance and ready to tell its story. The Roman Forum is one of those "high places" to which humanity goes on pilgrimages. Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, Thebes mark the great halting-places of civilization. Our classical education and our religious heredity allow us to read, almost as in an open book, the history of the monuments of Rome, Greece and Palestine. On the contrary, the greater number of the tourists who visit Thebes are in the same position a man would be in, who, placed in front of the Forum, had no idea of classical civilization, did not know one word of the history, the religion, or the arts of the Roman world. Many of them leave Thebes barely interested by the monuments they have been hurriedly shown; very few suspect their importance. It may seem bold to wish to show you in one lecture how important they are, and yet this is what I want to try to do.

When we begin to study the monuments of the past, we must first ascertain the facts; then, from these facts, evolve the ideas, and finally, through the facts and the ideas, reach the emotions. The facts are comparatively easy to grasp. Certainly they who enter for the first time the temple of Karnak find themselves before a "fact of stone" which in importance surpasses all imagination. When

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FIG. 110.

(Phot. Aerial Survey.)

KARNAK.

the inscriptions which cover the temples are translated, we find ideas expressed, many of which are strange, obscure, difficult to understand. Awakened by the conception of the importance of the fact, and directed by the expression of the ideas, the mind enters easily into the profound emotions of those men who built for their gods such monuments; witnesses so extraordinary that they still stand, across the centuries, as the most stupendous.

We must therefore start from the simplest and most spontaneous perception, and allow to work upon us what one might call the "spell of Karnak," giving to the word "spell" the sense of an incantation which attracts us,

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seizes upon us and carries us along at the magician's bidding.

To have an idea of Karnak as a whole, one would have to rise above the earth high enough to embrace in a glance the immensity of the sacred territory (Fig. 110). Three brick enclosures stand out on the ground. The



FIG. 111.

(Air phot. P. Kofler.)

TEMPLE OF AMON.

largest, in the centre, contains the temple of Amon, and the temple of the god Khonsu. On the South is the enclosure of the temple of Mut, and on the North that of the temple of Mentu. Amon is the master; the goddess Mut is his wife, the god Khonsu their son. Mentu is an ancient Theban god, dispossessed of his supremacy by Amon. Within the enclosure of Amon the buildings develop from the Avenue of the Sphinxes on the West, to the eastern portal. A series of pylons, from South to

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North, cross perpendicularly the main axis of the edifice. In the angle thus formed, on the East, we notice a great cavity still filled with water. These are the remains of the ancient sacred lake.

Let us approach closer to the ground (Fig. 111) and we shall be surprised at the considerable development of this group alone of religious monuments which, far from comprising all the temples of the town of Thebes, are only the principal residences of the god Amon. But, at the same time, Karnak represents thirty centuries of history. During a period of three thousand years the kings of Egypt delighted in enlarging the domain of their god, and this is what explains the intricacy of the constructions.

In the centre is the hypostyle hall (Fig. 112), where the visitor gets the impression that Gulliver must have experienced in the palace of Brobdingnag. When Champollion visited it, on the 24th of November, 1798, he wrote to his friends in Europe a letter of which the following passage has often been quoted : " I went at last to the palace, or rather, to the city of monuments, to Karnak. There all the magnificence of the Pharaohs appeared to me, all that men have imagined and executed on the grandest scale. All I had seen at Thebes, all I had admired enthusiastically on the left bank, seemed miserable in comparison with the gigantic conceptions by which I was surrounded. I will take very good care not to describe anything, for, either my expressions would only be equivalent to the thousandth part of what ought to be said when writing of such things, or else, if I made but a feeble sketch of them, even a very washed-out picture, I should be taken for an enthusiast, perhaps even for a madman. It will suffice to add that no people, ancient or modern, has conceived the art of architecture on a scale so sublime,

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so great, so grandiose as the ancient Egyptians. They conceived like men a hundred feet high, and the imagination which, in Europe, soars high above our portals, stops short and falls powerless at the foot of the one hundred and forty columns of the hypostyle hall of Karnak. ”



FIG. 112. (After Jean Capart.) HYPOSTYLE HALL.

Stone needles were erected in front of the principal entrances. Owing to the development of the edifice in the course of the ages, we now meet them towards the centre. The obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut is 29.5 metres high. In the inscription we find an interesting echo of the sentiment of pride with which the daughter of Thutmose I contemplated her work. “ My heart, ” says she,

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FIG. 113.

(After Jean Capart.)

OBELISK OF HATSHEPSUT.

“conceived the desire of making for Amon two obelisks of gold, the points of which should reach unto heaven... (Fig. 113). And you who, after long years, shall behold these monuments, who shall speak of what I have done, you will say : ‘ We do not know, we do not know how they can have made a whole mountain of gold, as if it were an every-day affair. ’ They are in one single block of hard granite, with neither pieces nor joint; My

Majesty caused them to be made in seven months’ time from their extraction from the mountain. To gild them, I have given gold measured by the bushel as if it were sacks of grain. And when My Majesty said the amount, it was more than the whole of the Two Lands had ever seen, and the ignorant man, like the learned man, knew it. When you shall hear this, do not say it is an idle boast, but : ‘ How like her this is, worthy of her father Amon. ’ ” And the most extraordinary thing is that it is true!

Everywhere, in front of the great pylons, are erected rows of colossal statues. In the Ramesseum, the funerary temple of Ramses II, are still to be found, lying upon the

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FIG. 114. (Phot. H. M. Queen Elizabeth.) COLOSSUS OF RAMSES II.

ground, the remains of what one may call the Colossus of Colossi (Fig. 114). Its weight is calculated to be about one million kilogrammes (nearly 1000 tons). It is only when we walk about on the broken pieces of the Colossus, somewhat as a fly might do upon a human visage, that we manage to realize the overwhelming proportions of this statue, in which, nevertheless, there is nothing coarse or disproportioned, and every detail of which has

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been executed with incredible delicacy and precision.

The sight of these immense temples, of these obelisks, of these colossi, the number of which was prodigious, naturally leads us to ask ourselves who were the men who constructed such monuments, what were the feelings which urged them to such a display of strength and riches, at a period when the peoples who later on were to develop the classical civilizations were only barbarians.

At the time when the kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty, about fifteen hundred years before our era, constructed the majestic pylons of Karnak, the city of Thebes occupied such a position that it was no exaggeration to look upon it as the centre of the world. The Egyptians did not even hesitate to make of it the primitive hillock, the starting-point of all creation.

A bas-relief affords us a striking illustration of this idea of the supremacy of Thebes over the rest of the world (Fig. 39). Thutmose III, who is rightly called the Egyptian Napoleon, is represented just as he is about to sacrifice a group of prisoners before Amon. The inscriptions tell us of mysterious lands, as far as the confines of Asia, whither the king has been led by his father Amon. The lists of the names of vanquished peoples comprise hundreds of localities, extending from the banks of the Euphrates on the north to the regions of the Upper Nile on the south. Amon himself presents to Thutmose III the sword which secures to him the submission of all the nations.

The expeditions are undertaken, as we have just said, at the order of the god, of whom the Pharaoh is the true son. Most frequently Amon is represented in human form, his head surmounted by two lofty plumes. In spite of the systematic destruction of the idols, we still find, in the centre of Karnak, the remains of a magnificent statue which is the work of Tutankhamon (Fig. 115). The god

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is represented with the features of the king, which is quite logical, considering the idea the faithful made for themselves of the relations which united divinity and royalty. It is this which explains that Pharaoh was the priest *par excellence*, the necessary medium between the god and the worshipper. In his functions as sovereign the king must follow the example

of the gods when they reigned upon this earth at the dawn of time. Pharaoh, their heir, must continue to maintain in good order the fair domain which has been bequeathed to him. In his intercourse with his subjects, it will be his duty to follow the laws scrupulously



FIG. 115.

(After Jean Capart.)

AMON OF TUTANKHAMON.

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and to be the faithful servant of the goddess of Truth. One of his principal obligations will be to maintain and, if needful, to extend the frontiers. Thus the reliefs of the temples often show us episodes of war

At Karnak, on the exterior walls of the hypostyle hall, Sethi I has left us a whole gallery of pictures of battles (Fig. 116). Here we see, in soberly conceived compositions, the fight itself, the capture of the fortified towns, the immolation of the chief of the enemy by the king himself, the trains of prisoners, the offering to the Theban gods of the first fruits of the spoil. For it is very natural that Amon, who has ordered the expedition, who has guided the king towards the mysterious regions, and who has protected him against all dangers should receive a share of the spoils of the enemy.

Such reliefs constitute precious pages of history, for they enable us to see how the power of Egypt, which for a long time had been developing itself far afield without meeting much resistance, ended by finding its limits. New empires were organized, their strength came into conflict with that of Egypt, and the clashing of the powers naturally brought about a policy of "balance." As the result of struggles which lasted for several centuries the Egyptians were unable to maintain their supremacy in Asia, and, under Ramses II, a treaty with the king of the Hittites defined the spheres of influence. But to bring about this compromise, the battle of Kadesh, in which the army, including the king himself, was well-nigh annihilated by the enemy, was necessary. In the texts and in the reliefs engraved upon the walls of the temples (Fig. 117), the event was, of course, transformed into a brilliant Egyptian victory, as we can see and read upon the pylons of the temple of Luxor.

At all the periods of their history the foreign policy of



FIG. 116.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

PICTURES OF BATTLES.

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the Pharaohs was dominated by the weakness of the natural frontiers of Egypt. On the west she is open to the attacks of the Libyan populations of Cyrene and, in general, of all the countries in North Africa. On the east the boundary of the isthmus has never constituted a serious barrier to invasions; towards the South the movement of the African populations menaces the regions of Nubia. More than once the rich black lands of the Valley of the Nile were invaded. Each time long wars were necessary to expel the invaders and to restore the Empire.

When Ramses II died, after a reign of fifty years, the danger was more threatening than ever. Movements of the peoples in the distant regions of the North prepared the way for the annihilation of the civilization of the Hittites in Asia Minor and for that of Crete, which then exercised its hegemony over all the basin of the Ægean Sea.

Already Merenptah, the son of Ramses II, was struggling to expel the Libyan, allies of the peoples of the sea, from the Delta which they had invaded. But the great assault took place during the reign of Ramses III. Towards 1200 B.C. the attacks succeeded one another, first on the western side, then from the east and, finally, again on the west. It was the last inroad of these populations, set in motion by distant events in the islands of the Ægean Sea and in the region of the Balkans. These invasions and migrations completely modified the ethnographical map of the Near East prior to the beginning of the first millenium before our era. The great temple of Medinet Habu (Fig. 118) is the memorial of the victories of Egypt over the barbarian forces let loose. The inscriptions describing the invasions of the year V, of the year VIII and of the year XI of the reign of Ramses III are abundantly illustrated by the bas-reliefs which cover the walls



FIG. 117.

(After Jean Capart.)

THE BATTLE OF KADESH.

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of the edifice. Here, for example, the king, in the midst of the fray, is slaughtering the Libyan invaders who are fleeing in indescribable panic (Fig. 120).

We may ask ourselves what would have happened if Ramses III had been beaten, if the Libyans, allied with the peoples of the sea, had swept away the dam formed by the Egyptian armies. The civilization of the Pharaohs would probably have been annihilated, together with that of the Hittites and the Cretans. These barbarous Europeans who, a few centuries later, were to put themselves to school with the Egyptians and borrow from them the elements which allowed of their raising themselves and soon surpassing their masters, would have had great difficulty in getting through the first stages in the path of progress. The temple of Medinet Habu consecrates the glory of a champion of civilization in an hour of stress.

We can easily understand why Egypt's neighbours readily turned their eyes towards the Valley of the Nile. Its prosperity was great, the reputation of its riches extended to the confines of Asia. We cannot think of studying, even briefly, the sources from which its wealth was unceasingly nourished. We find the symbol of them in an image engraved upon the throne of the colossal statues (Fig. 119). Two genii, whose plumpness indicates their prosperity, are busy tying the plants of Upper and Lower Egypt to the sign expressing the union of the two countries over which is exercised the royal omnipotence.

A series of bas-reliefs and numerous paintings illustrate the intercourse of the Egyptians with the neighbouring peoples. Often, we may suspect, purely commercial relations were presented under a form susceptible of flattering the national pride. Foreigners are depicted as tributaries coming to make submission to the Pharaoh,

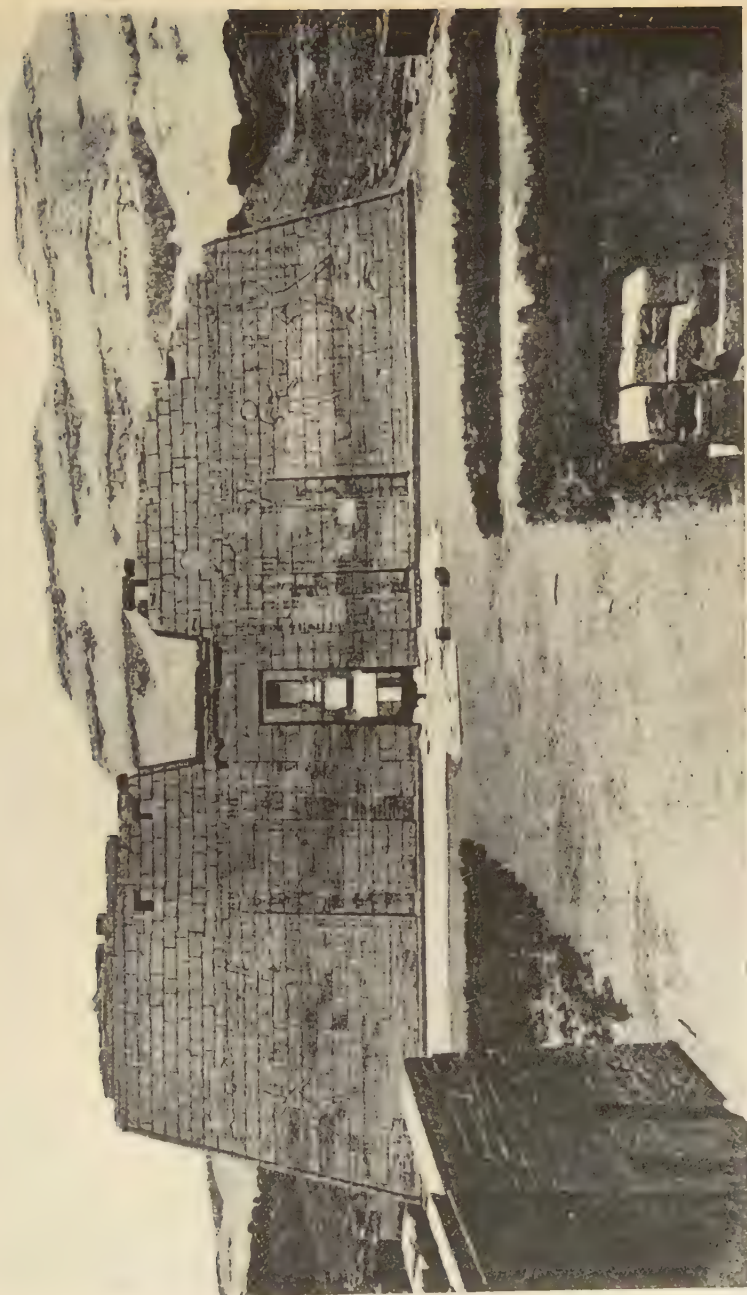


FIG. 118.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

MEDINET HABU.

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FIG. 119. (After Seif & Gaddis.) GENII TYING THE SYMBOLICAL PLANTS.

to whom they offer the most valuable products of their country. Thus, in the tomb of Rekhmara, governor at the time of Thutmose III, we see the Nubians, the Kef-



FIG. 120.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

THE LIBYAN INVADERS DEFEATED.

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tyew or Cretans and the inhabitants of the country of Punt soliciting the good-will of the king to whom they have brought riches of which the scribes are making an inventory. In another part of the same picture, we are present at the procession of young foreign princes brought into Egypt to be educated there. Later on, when they return to their own country, they will be the partisans of the Egyptian cause.

This country of Punt, of which we have just spoken, was a region whose exact position is not at all determined, but which was certainly situated on the coast of the Red Sea, far to the south of Egypt. Queen Hatshepsut, 1500 B.C., sent thither an expedition, the events of which have been depicted in the temple of Dêr el-Bahri. Here we see, for instance, the commander disembarking (Fig. 121), accompanied by his escort, and causing the jewels and the arms which are going to serve him for exchanges with the natives to be displayed. Above he is seen at the door of his tent, and before him is heaped the pile of incense which the Egyptians had gone so far to fetch.

The wealth of Egypt will strike us in all the manifestations of luxury, public and private. Can we doubt the refinement of the kings and queens when the tomb of Tutankhamon brings us the material proof of it? Previous to that, we had to convince ourselves especially by the study of the figured monuments. Thus the tomb of Nefertari, the principal wife of Ramses II, gives us a most striking image of this great lady (Fig. 122). The fineness of the tissues, the harmonious arrangement of the stuffs, the richness of the jewels, and even the grace of her attitude—all this indicates that we are in the presence of a woman for whom tasteful luxury was an indispensable condition of existence.

We shall have the same impression when visiting the



FIG. 121.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

EGYPTIANS DISEMBARKING AT PUNT.



FIG. 122. (After Seif & Gaddis.) THE PRINCIPAL WIFE OF RAMSES II.

house of Tehuti-nefer, chief of the treasury and royal scribe. We can visit it; for the painters who decorated his tomb have very carefully represented there a section of the dwelling from storey to storey, from the workshops

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on the ground-floor to the most private rooms (Fig. 123).

When we see the comfort of these middle-class houses, we are less astonished at the grandeur and richness of the temples. The latter were the terrestrial dwellings of the gods or the "houses of eternity" for the deceased kings. The architects often succeeded in translating perfectly into stone the forms which were usual in buildings made chiefly of bricks and wood. In spite of the devastations which continued for centuries and of which we shall speak presently, Thebes still shows us veritable masterpieces. It is to Queen Hatshepsut, or rather, to her architect, Senmut, that we owe the terraced temple of Dêr

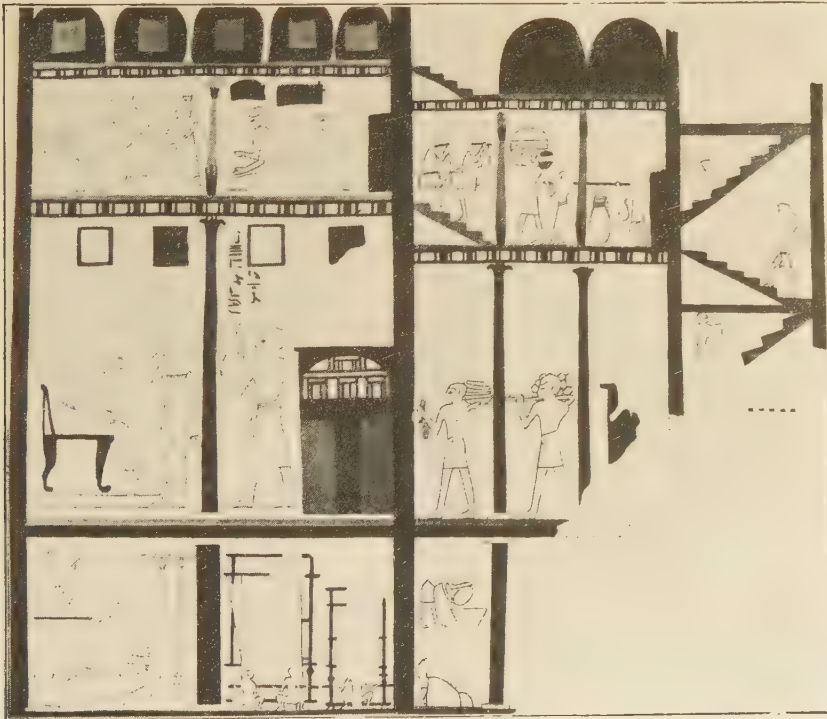


FIG. 123. (After E. Mackay.) THE HOUSE OF TEHUTI-NEFER.

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el-Bahri, backed by the mountain. The portico of Anubis and the colonnade of the north (Fig. 8) offer themselves to us with a simplicity of form and a harmony of proportion which infallibly call up a comparison with classical art. Nevertheless, the temple was built in 1500 B.C.

The temple of Luxor, constructed by Amenhotep III, has preserved for us one of the most wonderful architectural ensembles that can be seen at Thebes (Fig. 124). The great courtyard, at the back of which rises the hypostyle hall, affords us a perfect example of those admirable papyri-form columns which characterize the greater number of the constructions of the Pharaohs. They are often wrongly called lotiform columns, but when we analyze attentively their general form and the details of the decoration, we are not long in perceiving that they are all borrowed from the characteristic plants of the *Cyperus Papyrus* (Fig. 9).

Unhappily, this fine temple of Luxor was for a long time exploited like a real quarry; all the blocks of regular form have been carried off. The drums of the columns, with which nothing could be done, have not tempted the destroyers of the monuments; on the other hand, all the slabs of the ceilings and the outside walls have entirely disappeared. In order fully to appreciate the fine proportions of the building, it would be necessary to bring back into existence once more the play of light and shade intended by the architects; but who would be bold enough to rebuild Luxor?

This destruction of monuments began very early. At each invasion, at each revolution, the rage of the destroyers made itself felt. It is to the invasion of the Hyksos, between the Middle Kingdom and the Empire that we may attribute the quasi-complete annihilation of the monuments of Thebes prior to the XVIIIth Dynasty. Later

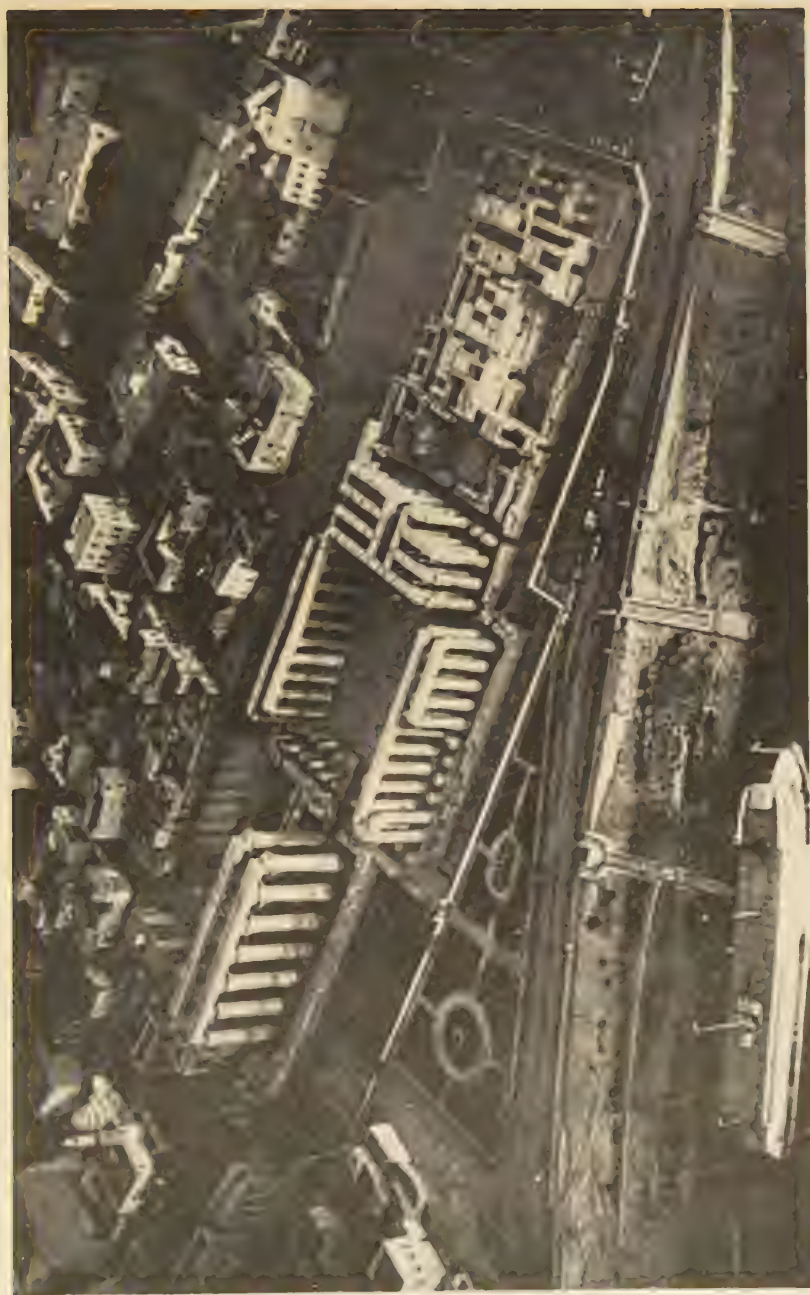


FIG. 124.

(Air phot. P. Koffer.)

TEMPLE OF LUXOR.

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on, the invasions of the Ethiopians, of the Assyrians, of the Persians, of the Greeks worked their ravages; then came the great wind of destruction which, when Egypt was converted to Christianity, blew fiercely in the heathen temples. Sometimes their transformation into churches saved them from complete destruction. Since then and during the centuries, they have been continually demolished so that their stones might be utilized for new buildings; and, at times, it was even by exploding mines that the Turkish soldiers blew up the pylons of Karnak.

A little attention allows us to discover, especially in the bas-reliefs and inscriptions, curious traces of the intestine struggles which troubled Thebes during the XVIIIth Dynasty. In the temple of Dêr el-Bahri, Thutmose III wished to do away with the images of Queen Hatshepsut who had preceded him upon the throne and whose legitimacy he contested. In the chapel of Anubis (Fig. 125) we see how the figure of the Queen has been completely effaced, as well as her name, which was upon the upper part of the panel.

A little later, during the reign of Amenhotep IV, a regular persecution of the cult of Amon was undertaken; the statues and the bas-reliefs which represented the god were destroyed and the name of Amon effaced wherever it could be reached. Nearly all the traditional gods were involved in the same ostracism. This is why, on the bas-relief of Dêr el-Bahri, the two figures of the jackal Anubis which were on the upper part have been carefully scratched out.

When going over the ruins of Thebes, the visitor very quickly learns to recognize these hammerings out which allow us to date the monuments on which we notice them. They are previous to the reign of Amenhotep IV. The son-in-law of this King, Tutankhamon, came back to

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FIG. 125.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

DEFACEMENT OF RELIEFS.

orthodoxy and gave orders to repair, as far as was possible, the heretical mutilations ordered by his father-in-law. The point of the broken obelisk of Queen Hatshepsut at Karnak shows clearly, when the light

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is favourable, the traces of these religious struggles. The Amons which had been effaced have been carved again at a level slightly lower than the rest of the figures. The name of the god is also engraved upon the trace of the hammering out. But how many masterpieces disappeared in the storm!

During the reign of Hatshepsut the traditions of the most perfect art of the Old Kingdom were renewed. Dêr el-Bahri was a masterpiece of Egyptian classicism.

Under Amenhotep III, the father of Amenhotep IV, Egyptian art had evolved. It had become more refined and, owing to causes not yet defined, it had taken on a new aspect. The same subjects, the same fundamental principles are always in use; nevertheless, the spirit is quite different.

One of the best examples of this new manner is the tomb of Ramose. The bearers of offerings (Fig. 126) in it are perfect and they show that their author possessed both a consummate science of drawing and a delicacy of touch which makes one think of the works of the most skilful engravers. Those who executed such bas-reliefs worked in series and sometimes it is possible for us to recognize, in several contemporary tombs, the hand of the same artisan, or, at least, the production of the same set of workers. In the tomb of Ka-em-hat which is at a short distance from that of Ramose, the processions of bearers of offerings give us pieces of work not only of equal value but of an almost identical touch (Fig. 127).

When the rock was not of a quality which permitted the execution of reliefs, the artists had to content themselves with pictures. The latter were executed on plaster. The painters reveal themselves as the equals of the sculptors. It would perhaps be more exact to say that



FIG. 126. (After Seif & Gaddis.) BEARERS OF OFFERINGS.

the figures were drawn by the same artists in both cases. We will content ourselves with citing two particularly remarkable examples. In the tomb of Mena a hunting

LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART

scene shows us the figure of a young girl bending over the edge of a boat and gathering lotus (Fig. 32). Another, standing, turned towards the stern, is laden with flowers and holds by the wings some of the birds which her father has just knocked down. In the tomb of Nakht, we admire the group of ladies listening to the song of the harper, while a young slave-girl moves about amongst them (Fig. 72).

Doubtless, these few reliefs and pictures will suffice to give an idea of the gallery of works of art which the Theban tombs constitute for us.

Sometimes the artists have abandoned their work before finishing it. This allows us to retrace the different stages. When the draughtsman did not feel sure enough of his skill to trace the figures without any guide, he took the trouble to establish a network of squared lines upon the walls. The study of all the examples known enables us to see that it was in no sense a question of a simple process whose object was to help him to transfer to the walls a copy from an exercise-book, but rather in order to allow of the strict observance of the laws of proportion. Fixed points of the body always fall exactly upon the same line, or even at the intersection of two lines. At the tomb of Su-em-nut, a whole wall enables us to examine closely such a process (Fig. 66). On other occasions, we are arrested in admiration before a sketch thrown off with prodigious sureness.

In the tomb of Ramose of which we were speaking a moment ago, we notice heads of foreigners whose ethnographical types have been rendered by means remarkable for their simplicity (Fig. 70). We may ask those persons who might make the remark that the eyes are drawn full face upon heads in profile, if it is possible to believe that a master, as skilful as he to whom

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we owe the group acted in this way through inexperience, or if it was not rather because he was applying a system different from ours.

These Theban tombs are a veritable treasure. They may be considered as a complete repertory of Egyptian life. The funerary doctrines of which we shall speak briefly further on had led the ancients to represent the



FIG. 127. (After W. M. Fl. Petrie.) BEARERS OF OFFERINGS.

most varied scenes in their sepulchres. The whole of contemporary life is depicted there, from the upper classes to the mass of humble folk.

For instance, let us look at a few episodes from the agricultural scenes in the tomb of Mena (Fig. 128). The entire wall is covered with representations of the harvest. The labourers have just cut the ears of corn which are being transported in nets. Two little girls occupied in gleaning have started quarrelling about some ears. A

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little farther, under the shade of a great sycamore in whose branches they have suspended the leather bottle which contains the drinking-water, one of the labourers is resting, while one of his companions is playing the flute. Below, two young girls are rendering one another the service of ridding their feet of the prickles which inevitably penetrate them when running over the fields which have just been reaped.

Very often such scenes are accompanied by inscriptions which animate them; here we can read the remarks which the actors in the different scenes exchange; we even read jokes, and this language often contrasts with that of the pompous inscriptions of the kings.

Up to the present, we have gone over the monuments of Thebes intent upon seeking the information which they may furnish us respecting the life of the ancients. If we have sometimes penetrated into the sepulchres, it has been only to contemplate some picture quite foreign to the idea of death.

It is time to occupy ourselves with this other town of Thebes, much vaster than that of the living : the necropolis whither the generations came to seek their eternal dwelling. This land of the dead was situated on the left bank of the Nile in the plain, on the first slopes of the mountain, and in the deep valleys which penetrate far into the latter. It is dominated by the Peak of the West (Fig. 129), which the ancients had deified and which they regarded as a redoubtable goddess, whose acts of vengeance were executed by the numerous serpents which haunted the mountain. He who had been bitten had no hope save in the mercy of the "Peak."

Each king chose a site in the western mountain in order to construct his funerary monument there. Until the beginning of the XVIIIth Dynasty they continued, accord-



FIG. 128.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

AGRICULTURAL SCENES IN THE TOMB OF MENA.

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ing to the traditions of the Old Kingdom, to combine in one whole the sepulchre properly so-called and the temple reserved to the cult of the dead.

We may affirm that for Amenhotep I the vault was already separated from the temple. Whereas the former was hidden in a fold of the mountain, the latter was erected on the edge of the desert. This separation seems to correspond to the desire of dissimulating as much as



FIG. 129. (After Jean Capart.) THE PEAK OF THE WEST.

possible the spot where the royal mummy reposes in order to preserve it from all violation. Thutmose I still further accentuated the secret character of the sepulchre by causing his vault to be dug at the bottom of a valley which from that time and for several centuries after served as a royal cemetery. But they continued to erect the temples at the limit of the cultivated lands. In the long run, they ended by being crowded one against the other, the last arrivals seeking a place between those first constructed, for which the most favourable situations



SHEIKH ABD EL KURNA.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

FIG. 130.

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had been chosen. One of the best of these was certainly the amphitheatre of Dêr el-Bahri (Fig. 171). It had already been utilized by the kings of the XIth Dynasty. The great Queen Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I, caused a funerary temple to be established there. It rose in terraces, the highest of which was supported against the rock which rises precipitously to the height of nearly 300 feet. An avenue of trees led from a vestibule in the valley to the sanctuary, of which the Holy of Holies was excavated in the mountain itself. Beyond the solid mass of the mountain, the vault containing the sarcophagus was arranged in such a way that one may consider it as being in close proximity to the spot where the disincarnate soul received the sacrifices necessary to survival.

The other funerary temples which still exist are : Kurna, the Ramesseum and Medinet Habu, consecrated respectively to the worship of Sethi I, Ramses II, and Ramses III. The stone edifice was surrounded by numerous buildings made of unbaked brick, which served as warehouses, accessory chapels, and habitations for the priests. In proximity to these temples, the great contemporary personages caused their sepulchres to be dug. We already know more than three hundred chapels adorned with reliefs and paintings. The hill of Sheikh Abd el Kurna, behind the Ramesseum (Fig. 130), was for a long time a favourite spot. Here we find, crowded one against the other, the tombs of high-priests, governors, chiefs of all the works of the king, treasurers, stewards, etc. The catalogue of the titles of these great personages enables us to reconstruct the framework of the Egyptian society of the most brilliant epochs.

The present state of this necropolis cannot give the least idea of the aspect it presented in antiquity. In spite of strenuous efforts, the Antiquities Department has

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not yet been able to expel the Arabs who have been installed for centuries in the tombs where they live pell-mell with the animals. In front of the part excavated in the mountain there formerly stood structures, generally of brick. They were small pylons, courts with porticos, more often simply a rectangular solid mass surmounted by a small pyramid. We know that gardens embellished with small fountains, planted in proximity to the tombs contributed to give them the aspect of inhabited houses.

We do not know where are the sepulchres of the queens of the XVIIIth Dynasty. A discovery by Howard Carter allows us to suspect that they were dissimulated in the innermost recesses of the mountain, in the most inaccessible places (Fig. 189). From the reign of Ramses II they



FIG. 131.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

BIBAN-EL-HARIM.

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were grouped, with the tombs of the princes, in a valley situated to the west of the temple of Medinet Habu, which is called the Biban-el-Harim (Fig. 131). Here were to be found only the vaults carefully closed on the day of the obsequies, as was the case for the tombs of the kings in the Biban-el-Moluk.

But it is time to visit this royal necropolis. The valley by which one has access to it breaks off from the plain on the north of the temple of Kurna. The sinuous route is encased between lofty mountains. The calcareous rock, which is somewhat friable, has been carved in a fantastic manner by the atmospheric agents (Fig. 132). At certain places, landslips have taken place which further accentuate the terrifying character of this road leading to the entry of Hades. The Egyptians called it the road where the sun sets. It is true that this is the western

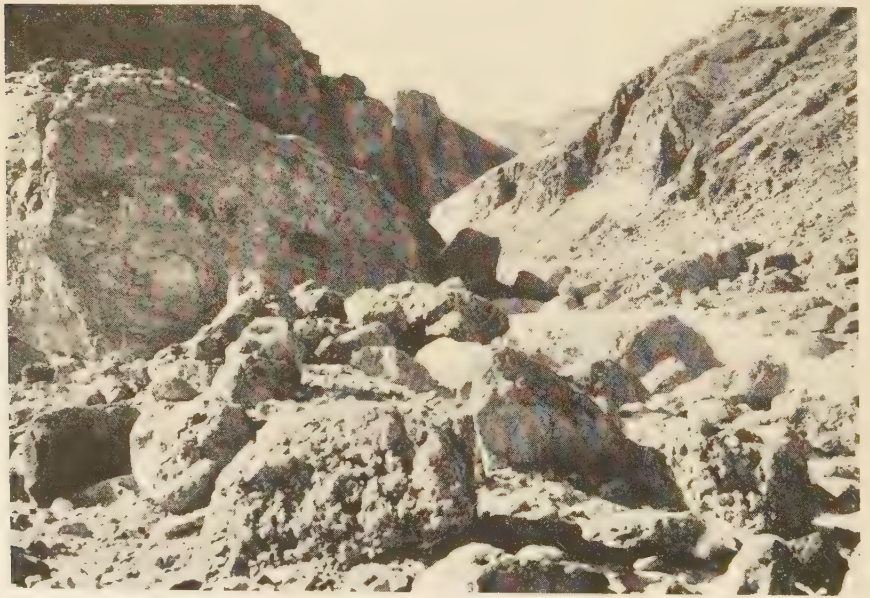


FIG. 132.

(After Jean Capart.)

THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS.

THE RUINS OF THEBES



FIG. 133.

(After L'Illustration.)

BIBAN-EL-MOLUK.

mountain in which every evening the sun seems to be engulfed. But, at the same time, it was there that went to their rest the Pharaohs, the Sons of the Sun, who identified themselves with the god who had begotten them.

After walking for several kilometres and crossing a threshold of stone cut through by the ancients (Fig. 146), we at last enter this necropolis, unique in the world, where the kings from the XVIIIth to the XXth Dynasties hoped to sleep in peace eternally. We must scale the mountain in order to embrace in one glance the whole of the royal cemetery (Fig. 133). We are in the middle of the desert and yet we involuntarily think of the gushing of the waters which have excavated in the plateau all these little valleys which unite in the principal bed. The way which we have just come served as an outlet towards the river. The royal tombs opened on the steep banks by doors hewn roughly in the rock.

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It is these gaping entrances which have given to the place its name of Biban-el-Moluk, that is to say, the gates of the kings.

In order to reach the vault where the mummy rested in its sarcophagus, we must make our way through a series of passages and stairways (Fig. 134) excavated in the rock, which lead us to what was called the golden hall. One must have seen the funerary furniture of Tutankhamon in order to understand how appropriate such a designation was.

The room of the sarcophagus, in a tomb of normal type, was generally of great dimensions and the hypogeum of Sethi I offers us a perfect example. It was divided into two parts of different levels (Fig. 135), and the sarcophagus was found in the lower part.

On the ceiling great astronomical pictures give us maps of the heavens, destined to guide the soul of the king, which, according to one doctrine, will fix itself among the constellations. On the walls are developed scenes describing with minutest details the different infernal regions into which the king will penetrate at the same time as the setting sun. There, in deepest mystery, is prepared the re-birth of the sun, which every morning returns to the day with renewed youth. The great privilege which the deceased king expects from these scenes and these painted formulæ is this faculty of accompanying the sun in its course instead of remaining confined in the mysterious dwellings of the other world. The infernal regions were conceived as a counterpart of this earth; so the pictures which describe them minutely are divided into three registers (Fig. 137) : in the middle one is the Nile upon which sails the bark of the dead sun.† The serpent Apopis seeks to hinder its advance, but gods and goddesses struggle against the monster and end by



FIG. 134.

(After Beato.)

INSIDE A ROYAL TOMB.

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reducing it to impotency. Above and below, that is to say on the two banks, are figured the genii who inhabit the regions of night and of death. It is there also that are found the cauldrons where the souls of the damned are tormented by the fire-spitting genii.

When we go through these royal tombs we have really the impression of discovering a new world, and one cannot fail to marvel at the imagination of the Egyptians who believed themselves capable of describing with so much precision the destiny and the peregrinations of souls on the other side.

But we must beware of making a mistake; this exactness is only apparent. There were at least two fundamental doctrines: one described in the Book of the Tuat and the other in the Book of the Gates. Uncertain as to which was the better, they resigned themselves to putting the two manuals at the disposal of the deceased kings, hoping they would know how to make use of the one that was necessary at the psychological moment.

When we come out of the hypogea and find ourselves once more in the glaring light of Egypt, we have the impression of having, in our turn, gone through the formidable ordeal and, thanks to the use of the magic texts, of having escaped from the terrors of the land beyond the tomb and "come out into the day," as the texts say.

This destiny beyond the tomb, which united the life of the defunct king to that of the solar disk, was not the lot of simple mortals. It even appears that for the king himself it was only a development of somewhat recent date.

According to the old doctrine, the deceased or, more exactly, his disembodied soul lived in the tomb which was, in all the force of the term, a house of eternity. The

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FIG. 135.

(After H. Burton.)

THE GOLDEN HALL.

spirit, separated from the body had been fixed by magical ceremonies in a statue which, henceforward, was to serve him as a support. This is so true that it would be better to call the chapel of the tomb the “house of the living statue.” A particular ceremony, which took place at the

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moment of the funeral, attached the soul to the statue. In the funerary paintings one can often follow the stages of the magical operation. In the tomb of Khonsu (Fig. 136) for example, we see the representation of the



FIG. 136.

(After W. Wreszinski.)

OPENING OF THE MOUTH.

façade of the monument resting upon the mountain, as we have already described it. The statues representing the deceased and his wife are standing, and, while the mourners lament, the priests pour forth libations and burn incense, and during this time the reciter reads from a papyrus roll the formulæ which must accompany each of the gestures. Between the priests are carefully represented all the accessories needful for the complete execution of the rite.

The statue, thus “ animated, ” is then installed in the chapel and all the scenes represented on the walls have no other object but to give the soul the impression that it is continuing to enjoy all the good things of terrestrial existence. 21 .

The texts carefully avoid speaking of death.

Sometimes the formulæ even wished the personage a

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long and prosperous life and expressed the desire that, later on, he might rest in the necropolis after a happy old age. The harper took as the theme of their song that life is brief, that all earthly things are ephemeral, and that, consequently, what is all-important is to benefit by these fleeting days before the moment comes when we must leave all we love to take our rest in the western mountain.

In this way the Egyptians were led to represent upon the



FIG. 137.

(After Seif & Gaddis.)

PORTION OF THE TUAT.

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walls of their tombs the most diverse scenes of earthly existence. Thus it is that banquets, worldly fêtes, pleasures and sports occupy a prominent place in these representations. It is therefore a mistake to see in these scenes the biography of the deceased, although it may happen from time to time, especially when it is a question of a very exalted personage, that one may find an episodic touch connected with a particularly solemn moment of his career. But this is exceptional.

As a rule the representations are the image of a life which is, so to say, theoretical; full of all the satisfactions which seem indispensable to ensure that the soul, satisfied with the dwelling of eternity, shall remain therein in peace, with no thought of ever claiming anything from the living. It will suffice that the latter, on certain determined feast-days, betake themselves to the tomb to offer sacrifices there, or even to celebrate the feasts of which the deceased was supposed to partake. Such is, as we have just said, the most ancient doctrine. But very early we see appearing in the pictures scenes which are connected with other conceptions of the life beyond the tomb. The Egyptians also believed that the defunct left this earth and, after various peregrinations, more or less exciting, after having surmounted numerous difficulties, arrived in regions situated outside our universe. The fields of Yaru were one of these sojourns of the souls and their representation shows us clearly what conception the people had of them. The souls are admitted in the capacity of colonists of the god; they must cultivate the soil and undertake forced labour. That is why, at the tomb of Senejem, for instance (Fig. 138), we see the deceased, in the company of his wife, busy ploughing, gathering the flax, harvesting the grain. The way in which the landscape has been rendered shows the exceptional fertility of this region



FIG. 138

(After W. Wiczinski)

FIELDS OF YARU.

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where, in spite of being compelled to work, the deceased who had undergone the judgment of Osiris before penetrating into it, were assured of finding eternal happiness.

We have seen how, by going through the ruins of Thebes, it is possible to reconstruct precisely all the life of ancient Egypt. We said in beginning that at Rome every stone is full of meaning and ready to relate its history. So it is in Thebes. As we cross the great temples, at every step in the necropolis; we seem to hear the echo of voices which come to us from the past. All unite in a concert which is somewhat deafening; the gods, the kings, the great personages, the common people come and talk to us. We have even caught the din of battles. Nowhere else is the picture so complete, for there are few ruins in the world which are covered with more inscriptions. For long centuries these constituted an indecipherable enigma, until the moment when, in 1822, the genius of Champollion succeeded in forcing their secret. But it is not enough that only specialists should have the privilege of wandering among the monuments and experiencing the unique enjoyment of evoking the dead and causing them to bear witness to the glory of vanished empires. Here are great lessons which are precious for all humanity and it would be a crime to allow them to be lost.

In 1864 Renan wrote : " This great era of the XVIIIth, XIXth and XXth Dynasties, of Ahmose, Amenhotep, Thutmose, Sethi, Ramses, has left us an enormous mass of inscriptions and we may say that we should know it with as much certitude as we know the state of the Roman Empire in the third century of our era if the number of savants who copy and translate the Egyptian texts were more considerable. "

But, it will be said, there is no hurry; these ruins are

THE RUINS OF THEBES

eternal; henceforth there is no more fear of fresh sacrilegious devastations. People forget that there are natural forces which, more surely than man, will end by destroying these monuments. Every year the waters of the Nile penetrate by infiltration into the temples at the moment of the inundation (Fig. 139); every year, at the moment of the retreat of the waters, landslips are produced in the sub-soil, which destroy the foundations. A little later,

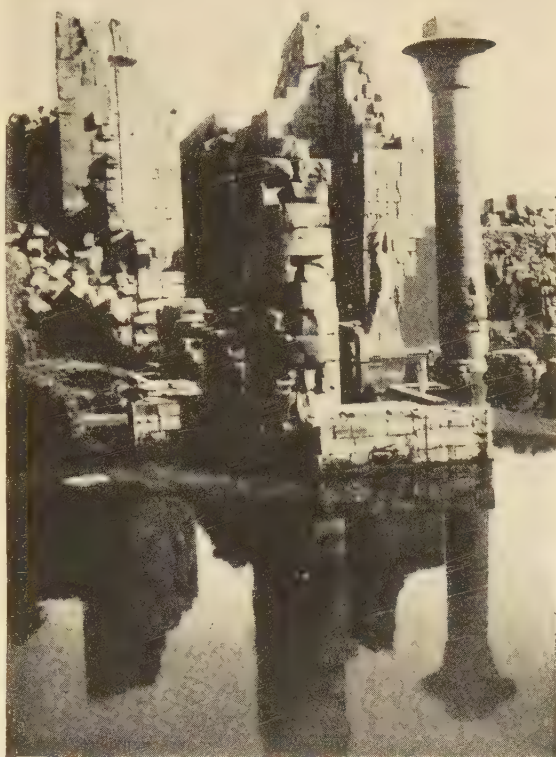


FIG. 139.

(After M. Pillet.)

INFILTRATION INTO THE TEMPLE.

the damp which has penetrated the earth produces growths on the surface that consume inexorably the delicate reliefs. The granite itself can not resist this process; the feet of the colossi are eaten away by a veritable leprosy (Fig. 140); the inscriptions on their bases are crumbling away, and an attentive observer who returns to Thebes after a few years' absence is alarmed to see with what rapidity this disastrous state of things is becoming accentuated. If we do not want future generations to reproach

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us, and rightly, with having allowed these precious pages of the history of humanity to be lost, we must not delay one moment. Armies of workers would be indispensable to photograph, cast, publish these reliefs, these paintings, these inscriptions. Each document adds an indispensable touch to the great picture of Egyptian civilization.

It is only by an attentive study of details, sometimes infinitesimal, that one arrives at showing clearly the ties which unite us to these old Egyptians who were probably the first to cause man to pass from barbarism to civilization. The universities, the great American museums, have happily recognized this and for some twenty years we have been following with admiring wonder the works executed by the American Egyptologists in the Valley of the Nile. It is in order to have the honour of collaborating in this work

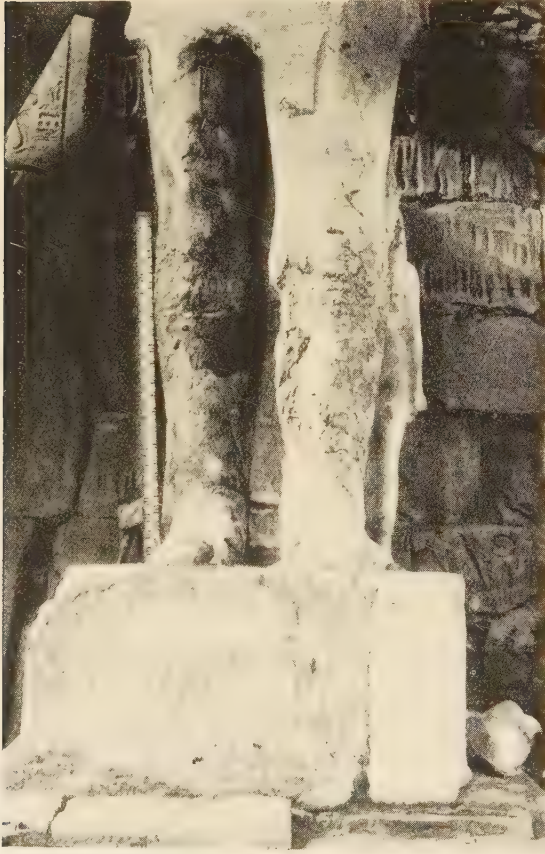


FIG. 140. (After M. Pillet.)
THE FEET OF THE COLOSSUS ERODED.

THE RUINS OF THEBES

that the Belgians have created the Queen Elizabeth Egyptological Foundation. It is our ambition to occupy our little part of the Egyptological Front, and you know that when once we have taken up our place there, we shall hold it with the same tenacity as that with which we held the trenches of the Yser, side by side with our faithful and valiant allies.

FIFTH LECTURE

*H. M. Queen Elizabeth of Belgium at the Tomb
of Tutankhamon.*

H. M. QUEEN ELIZABETH OF BELGIUM AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

IT is not everyone who has the good fortune to visit Egypt. There are few, however, who would not wish to undertake that journey. The monuments of Pharaonic civilization exercise a veritable fascination. Their remote antiquity, the touch of mystery with which they are so often endowed, the weird inscriptions which cover them, which have baffled the sagacity of the learned for centuries, these and many more things are the reasons why no intelligent man is indifferent to the study of Ancient Egypt. The most recent statistics in the great museums have shown, for a long time back, that the Egyptian sections have attracted the greatest number of visitors.

No wonder that the marvellous discovery of Tutankhamon's tomb in the Valley of Biban-el-Moluk at Thebes stimulated intensely the interest of the public. The news of the discovery aroused a feeling of curiosity unequalled in the history of archæology. Now that the beating of records is in favour, we may boldly state that Tutankhamon has beaten all records by the rapidity of his rise into popularity. Three years ago barely one hundred specialists had read his name in the hieroglyphics and knew in addition a very few details concerning the chief events of his reign. To-day we may wonder if there are still many human beings so ignorant of the history of civilization as not to have heard of Tutankhamon.

As I enjoyed the most gratifying privilege of accompanying Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Belgium and His

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Royal Highness Prince Leopold in their visit to the famous tomb, will you trust yourselves to me as your guide? I shall take you into the great Theban necropolis, and finally to the sepulchre which has become the cynosure of all curiosity.



We are on the terrace of the Winter Palace at Luxor (Fig. 141). At our feet flows the great river whose waters spread as far as the Western Mountain during the period of inundation. We are on the right bank of the Nile, at the very spot where stood Thebes, for fifteen or twenty centuries the capital of the Pharaohs. There rose the majestic temples, the wealthy palaces, the dwelling-places of grandees, the populous parts of a town which, at a certain period, may have counted nearly a million inhabitants. Only a few temples are left, but, even so, they constitute the vastest ruins in the whole world; they stand as eloquent testimonials of the importance of the town which they once commanded. We may notice, with a touch of philosophy, that these monuments of the Pharaohs' pride and wealth, are nowadays called Karnak and Luxor, the names of two small Arab settlements. Thebes has disappeared almost entirely and its name is no longer to be found on our modern maps. But, if the town of the living has vanished, the same cannot be said of the necropolis. Strange to say, the left bank of the Nile, opposite Luxor, is still called Thebes. Tourists who visit those ruins usually say that they are going to Thebes.

Let us glance at the map of this Land of the Dead (Fig. 143). We must first note the well-defined line of demarcation which still separates the cultivated land from the desert and from the mountain. In the olden days the temples consecrated to the worship of the great kings, from the XVIIIth to the XXth Dynasties, stood on this



FIG. 141.

(After Jean Capart.)

FROM THE TERRACE OF THE WINTER PALACE.

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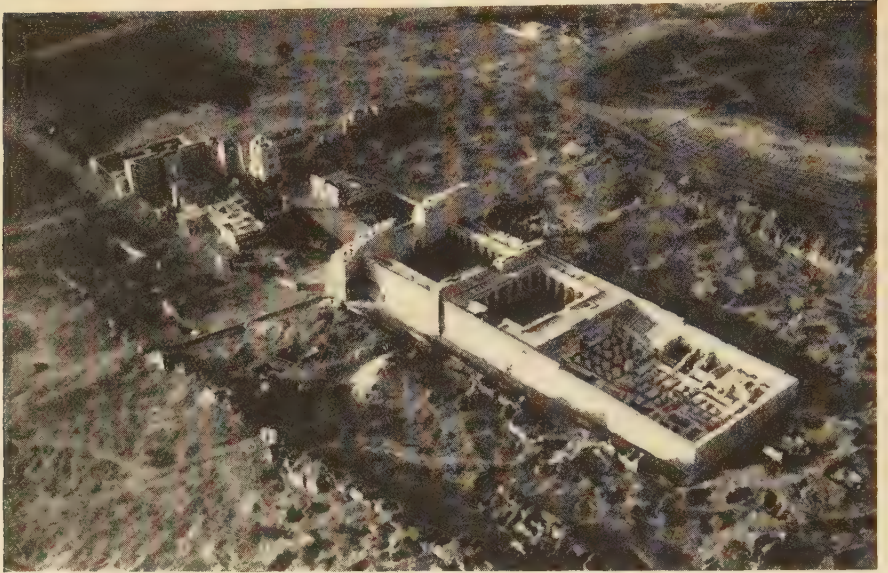


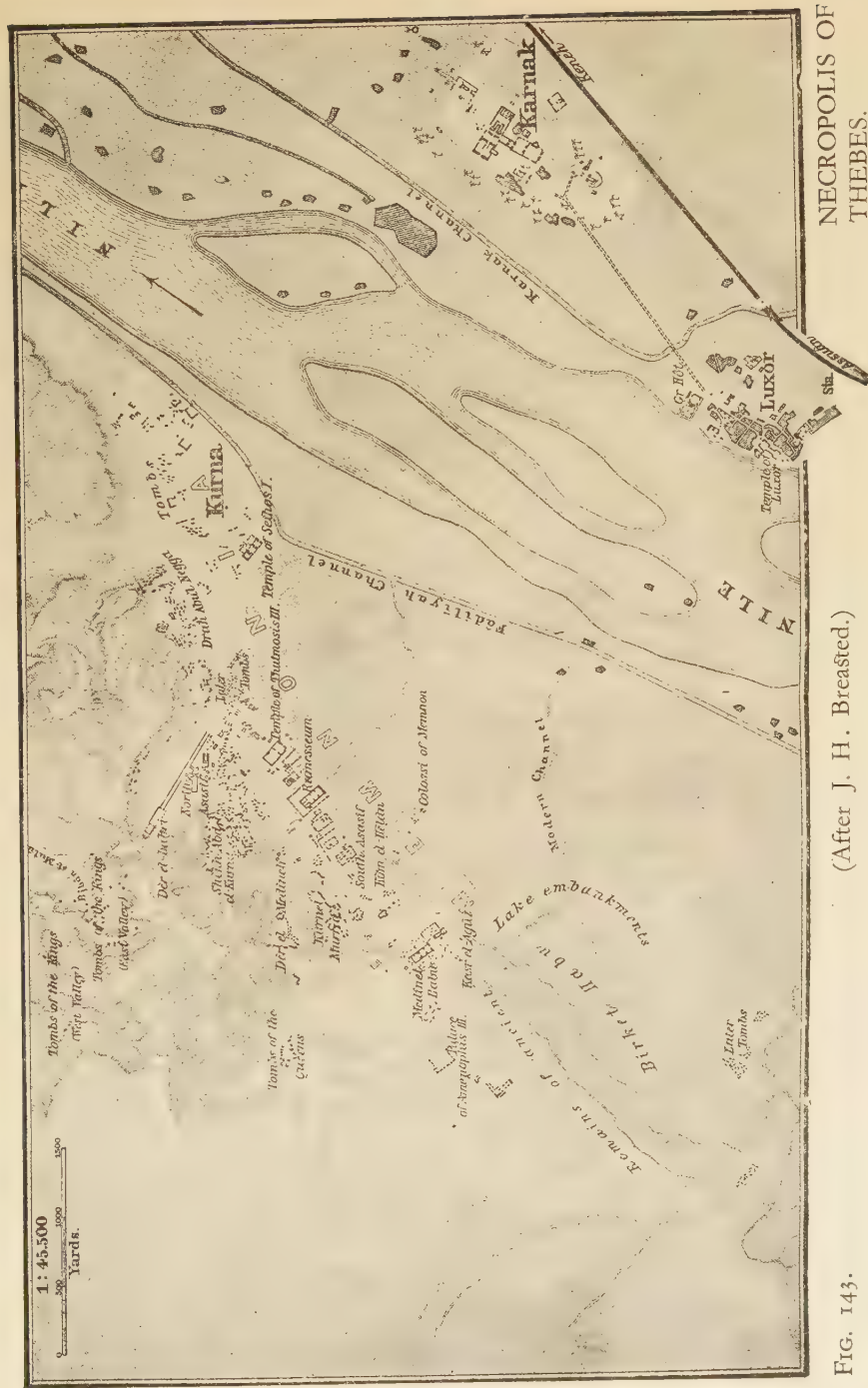
FIG. 142.

(Air phot. P. Kofler.)

MEDINET HABU.

border. Some of them are still extant, such as the Temple of Kurna, dedicated to Sethi I, the Ramesseum dedicated to Ramses II, and Medinet Habu dedicated to Ramses III. These are huge buildings hardly inferior to the most sumptuous structures consecrated to the gods. The Temple of Medinet Habu, for instance, sets up its two immense pylons high above courts adorned with porticos of gigantic proportions (Fig. 142). The temple itself is surrounded by a vast enclosure, the entrance-door of which is in the shape of a fortress. The whole of the plain and the first slopes of the mountain were filled with innumerable tombs in which were laid to their last sleep, close to the temples of their kings, many of the latter's contemporaries.

A high mountain which the ancients used to call the Peak of the West towers above the whole necropolis



NECROPOLIS OF
THEBES.

(After J. H. Breasted.)

FIG. 143.

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(Fig. 129). It was commonly believed that the goddess whose abode it was manifested herself in the shape of a serpent. The Peak appears as if placed on a base the sides of which are rugged cliffs. Towards the north these stretch out into a wide curve, forming the amphitheatre of Dêr el-Bahri (Fig. 171), at the back of which we can see the funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut, who lived at the beginning of the XVIIIth Dynasty, 1500 years B.C.

Not very far off, toward the south, we can climb the slopes of the hill of Sheikh Abd el Kurna (Fig. 130). All around we see tombs; or, to be more accurate, funerary chapels where the worship of the departed was celebrated.

Now let us look at the plain, which stretches majestically beneath us. In the foreground, the soil of the necropolis is uneven, indeed rugged. Here we have the Ramesseum whose ruins are surrounded by remains of brick buildings formerly used as storehouses. Beyond the temple, notice the contrast between the black fertile earth and the whiteness of the desert. The two Colossi of Memnon on the right look almost insignificant. Far off the Nile looks like a narrow silver ribbon. Beyond, you can see another strip of black earth and, finally, the Arabian mountains, almost melting into the horizon. Behind the Temple of Medinet Habu, the necropolis of the queens is hidden in a desolate valley; it is called the Biban-el-Harim (Fig. 131). As a matter of fact, it was not until the beginning of the XIXth Dynasty that this spot was chosen as the burial place of queens and princes. Until quite recently nobody had the vaguest notion of the spot where the older tombs lay hidden. Carter, however, had been led on the track of a tomb situated very far up on the mountain (Fig. 144), in a valley difficult of approach and of the wildest aspect.



FIG. 144.

(After H. Carter.)

TOMB PREPARED FOR HATSHEPSUT.

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This tomb had been prepared for Queen Hatshepsut in the face of a great perpendicular cliff, in a spot as difficult of access from below as from the summit. We are therefore entitled to believe that the tombs of the great queens belonging to the XVIIIth Dynasty are hidden in the very heart of the mountains.

Mariette Pasha, the great explorer of Egypt, used to say that some of the tombs were so well concealed that they could never be found—using the word “never” in an absolute sense.



It is now time to turn our steps in the direction of the Valley of the Kings. Let us have another look at the map of the necropolis (Fig. 143). A road runs on the mountain side, to the north of the Temple of Kurna. After a few miles it divides into two sections; one of them stretches more to the west and the other turns to the south and takes us to the famous valley of Biban-el-Moluk, situated exactly behind the amphitheatre of Dêr el-Bahri. Just after leaving the plain, already in the desert, we come across the house of Howard Carter (Fig. 145). The farther we advance, the more we are impressed by the fantastic and desolate aspect of the landscape. A strange feeling of having left the world of the living to penetrate into that of the dead creeps over us. Under the action of atmospheric phenomena, the rocks are cut into the strangest shapes. Now and again enormous boulders bar the way (Fig. 132). In many places the summits are jagged in such a way as to make them look like old tumble-down fortresses overhanging the valley.

If a man wishes to feel acutely all the emotion that such a site can inspire, let him go there alone just before twilight; he will fancy himself transported into another world,



THE HOUSE OF HOWARD CARTER.

(After Jean Capart.)

FIG. 145.

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whence all life, human or animal, has been banished, and he will truly wonder whether, after all, there is not some truth in the fateful appropriation of certain landscapes. No spot could have been more suitable for the reception of the corpses of those illustrious Pharaohs who called themselves "the Sons of the Sun," and for whom death meant only a return to the sun which had created them! The ancients used to call the valley: "The path of the setting Sun." It is not an easy matter to determine the exact meaning the Egyptians gave to the expression. Were they alluding to the sun which sets in the western mountain or to the departed Pharaoh who had gone to "his Place of Eternity?"

At the end of the road we find a stone threshold (Fig. 146) in which the Egyptian engineers had dug a trench somewhat in the shape of a big S. As soon as we have crossed it, we are inside the necropolis. To grasp better all it represents let us climb the slope of the mountain. After a short time let us turn round and get a full view of this cemetery, unique in the world (Fig. 133). Here and there we see the doorways of various tombs, breaking with deep, shadowy holes the intense light that covers the rocks. How one longs to have eyes able to penetrate the stone and behold those hypogea which so far have escaped the keenest searchers!

One understands the fascination of such a site for all who have a passion for archæological research and who are obstinately bent on ravishing new treasures from the valley—in spite of the fact that so many persons declare it to be exhausted. To anyone acquainted with the history of Biban-el-Moluk it is no small wonder that any of the tombs should have been discovered almost untouched. It is the history of an unceasing struggle between the efforts put forth on the one side to preserve



FIG. 14.

(After Jean Capart.)

BEGINNING OF THE STONE THRESHOLD.

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the royal mummies and their wealth, and the cunning and audacity displayed on the other with the object of carrying off the royal spoils. Whenever the central authority became weak, gangs of thieves were organized to plunder the necropolis.

As early as the XVIIIth Dynasty, the Pharaoh Harmhab had to repair the tomb of Thutmose IV. During the XXth Dynasty the depredations reached such a pitch that the responsible authorities no longer dared leave the mummies in their too isolated caves. They moved them from one hiding place to another, without fixing on any as an ultimate resting place. Fortunately, at every removal, they carefully wrote a protocol on the coffin or even on bandages of the mummy. This enables us to retrace their peregrinations. Under the first king of the XXth Dynasty, Sethi I and Ramses II were examined and swathed up again. Ten years later Ramses I and Ramses II were transferred to the tomb of Sethi I. Some time after all three were removed and laid in the tomb of Queen Anhapu.

Another sovereign of the same dynasty, Menkheperre, found the mummies desecrated; he repaired them and took them out of the valley to lay them in the sepulchre of Amenhotep I, concealed in one of the recesses of the mountain to the south of the entrance of Biban-el-Moluk. It was not over yet, for at the end of the XXIIInd Dynasty they were enclosed in a hiding place dug in the amphitheatre of Dêr el-Bahri.

During the Greek and Roman periods several tombs were opened wide and the tourists who visited them wrote down their names on the wall. This custom is to be deplored when it is practised by our own contemporaries, but it becomes highly interesting when the culprits have been dead for twenty centuries! It has been ascer-

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



FIG. 147. (After Th. M. Davis.) ON THE WAY TO THE TOMB OF THUTMOSE III.

tained, thanks to these very inscriptions, that some of the tombs offered a shelter to anchorites in the first centuries of our era.

In spite of many difficulties, the body of learned men who accompanied Napoleon on his expedition to Egypt,

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managed to undertake various excavations in the Valley of the Kings and they brought to light the tomb of Amenhotep III in the western part. In October, 1817, the Italian Belzoni penetrated into the hypogeum of Sethi I, the bas-reliefs and paintings of which are exceptionally delicate. After going through long passages and down numerous steps deep into the heart of the mountain, he found the alabaster sarcophagus which has been since transported to the Soane Museum in London. The huge stone coffin stood in the middle of a room which, in spite of some mutilations, produces the greatest impression on all visitors (Fig. 135). The vaulted ceiling, on which constellations are represented, provides us with



FIG. 148. (After Jean Capart). NEAR THE TOMB OF HATSHEPSUT.

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



FIG. 149. (After Th. M. Davis.) NEAR THE TOMB OF AMENHOTEP II.

a celestial map three thousand years old. On the walls an illustrated copy of a guide enables the dead king to find his way about among the terrors of the infernal regions. The different chapters of this strange descent

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into the Inferno are distributed among the various rooms of the tomb (Fig. 137). The composition is always divided into three registers. In the middle one the boat of the sun is sailing on the subterranean river. Above and below, that is to say on the two banks of the river, are represented inhabitants of the region : souls of the blessed and souls of the damned, or genii whose mission it is to exercise divine justice.

I have described the tomb of Sethi I at some length because I think it is a good example of the inner decoration of the majority of the tombs of Biban-el-Moluk. From 1817 to 1898, there is hardly anything worth noting save the discovery at Dêr el-Bahrî, in 1881, of the above-mentioned hiding place, which has furnished the Cairo Museum with the greater number of the royal mummies to be seen there now.

In 1898, Victor Loret, Director of the Antiquities Department disclosed two royal tombs at Biban-el-Moluk, the first being that of Thutmose III, situated in one of the most fantastic corners of the valley (Fig. 147). One wonders if it was through the air that the Egyptians transported the heavy granite sarcophagus which lies at the bottom of the burial vault.

As for the tomb of Amenhotep II, Loret found the entrance to it under heaps of rubbish at the foot of a perpendicular cliff (Fig. 149), and, as he penetrated into it, he discovered beside Amenhotep II, then still in his sarcophagus, several kings of the Empire, who were missing in the collection of Cairo. Notwithstanding this fortunate find, the Antiquities Department, absorbed by more urgent work for the consolidation of the temples, neglected the Valley of the Kings.

In 1902, Theodore Davis obtained leave to start new excavations under the direction of the Government's

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



FIG. 150.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

HEAD OF CANOPIC JAR.

inspectors. His efforts were crowned with success when he discovered the tomb of Thutmose IV the same year. The following year Carter cleared for Davis the tomb of Queen Hatshepsut, also situated at the foot of a rugged cliff (Fig. 148). With the assistance of Weigall,

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the tomb of the father- and mother-in-law of Amenhotep III, Iouiya and Touiyou, with its splendid furniture, was discovered in 1902. This tomb had remained concealed under the accumulation of rubbish resulting from the excavations of two hypogea of the XXth dynasty (Fig. 178). After the lapse of so many centuries, there is really something disconcerting in facing Queen Tiyi's father! (Fig. 179.) It is the

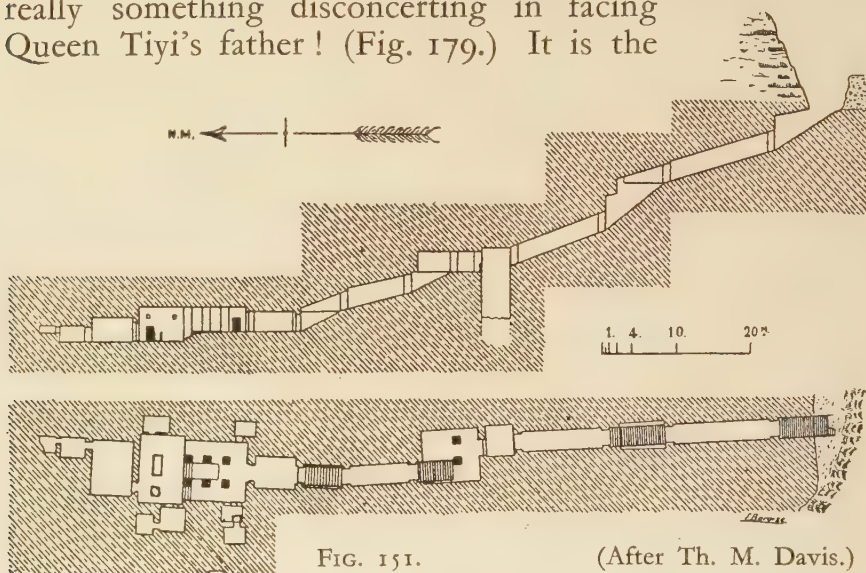


FIG. 151.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

TOMB OF HARMHAB.

triumph of the embalmer's art to have been able thus to preserve in corpses the appearance of real life.

Fortune continued to smile on Davis; in collaboration with Ayrton, he found the tombs of Siptah and Tausert; and later, in 1907, a hiding place containing pieces of the funerary furniture of Amenhotep IV and his mother Tiyi. The wonderful canopic jars containing the entrails of the mummy are closed by carved lids, which are real masterpieces (Fig. 150). One of them is now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

Finally, in 1908, Davis discovered the beautiful tomb

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



SARCOPHAGUS.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

FIG. 152.

of Harmhab. The plan and the section of this important sepulchre may help us to understand the general disposition of the royal tombs (Fig. 151). In the big room, called by the Egyptians "the Golden Hall," the sarcophagus is still standing (Fig. 152). Four stone goddesses with their wings spread in a protecting attitude stand at the corners, and watch over the mummy lying in its stone coffin.

While pursuing his researches Davis had come across

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a few small articles marked with the name of Tutankhamon. He could reasonably believe that he had collected the few remains of that king's tomb completely pillaged long ago. In 1912, when he published the last report of his discoveries, he had no hesitation in writing : " I fear that the valley of the tombs is now exhausted ! " And it was under such conditions that, prompted by his collaborator and friend, Howard Carter, Lord Carnarvon was bold enough to start excavating again in the Valley of the Kings. Now that success has crowned their efforts, it is all very well to commend pertinacity which is bent on finding treasures where, according to all probability, nothing at all is to be found save crumbled stones and sand. But how would their enterprise have been judged, if they had had to give it up and come home empty-handed?

Think what it means to begin excavating again in a soil dug up at all periods by treasure-hunters! How many times has the rubbish proceeding from the excavations been removed? It has been reported that the workmen employed by Carnarvon and Carter displaced no less than twenty thousand tons of materials.

Let us see how the work is done (Fig. 153). Men armed with pick-axes set to work upon a slope several yards high; when they have excavated a certain amount of rubbish, they pile it into small baskets, which children about ten years old take on their shoulders or their heads. They have to walk some distance to get rid of the contents of their baskets. A great improvement was effected when they managed to empty the baskets at once into a small waggon. A few yards of rails enabled them to transport the rubbish a little farther off.

The whole winter through, for long hours every day, the same effort was renewed amid blinding clouds of white dust. Now and again the monotony of the work

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



FIG. 153.

(After H. Carter.)

EXCAVATIONS IN THE VALLEY.

was barely interrupted by some small find. One day, however, a few piles of rough stones came to light (Fig. 154); their position indicated that they had been used as shelters by workmen of the Pharaonic epoch. A few yards off was the entrance to the tomb of Ramses VI. That day Carter reasoned in a perfectly logical manner, but his argument proved wrong in the end. "Never," thought he, "would anyone have built houses for the workmen right over a royal tomb!" And from that day excavations were interrupted there and the squad of workmen was sent to another part of the valley. It was only later on, I might almost say at the eleventh hour, when Lord Carnarvon, discouraged at last, was talking of giving up that "cursed valley" where nothing was ever found, that

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FIG. 154.

(After H. Carter.)

SOME PILES OF ROUGH STONES.

the idea occurred to Carter (some would say it was a presentiment) that, after all, there might well be something beneath the workmen's houses. Leave was given him to try his luck once more during a brief period of excavation. Fresh work had hardly been started, when, at the beginning of November, 1922, the pick-axes uncovered the first steps of a staircase hewn in the rock. Before the day was over a doorway began to show (Fig. 155). Enough of it could be seen to ascertain that it was still sealed up, and Carter wired to Lord Carnarvon, then in England, to come without delay.

At last a royal tomb had been found intact in the valley of Biban-el-Moluk! By the end of the month, Lord Carnarvon, accompanied by his daughter, Lady Evelyn Herbert, and by Carter, penetrated into the tomb

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

of Tutankhamon, one of the last kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty, who reigned about 1350 years B.C.

We all remember the emotion caused by the first dispatches published in the leading newspapers. A few weeks



FIG. 155.

(After H. Carter.)

DOORWAY OF THE TOMB.

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later, the photos arrived and showed us in what condition the explorers had found the sepulchre. Such a collection of wonders had never been dreamed of! The furniture of the king bore witness to a degree of luxury and wealth absolutely unknown to the public at large, though more than once hinted at by specialists. The same word kept coming as a *leit-motiv* in the explanatory notes at the foot of the illustrations : gold, still more gold, gold everywhere! Fact soon passed into the realm of legend and such quantities of the precious metal were mentioned as to arouse jealousy in the heads of the greatest financial establishments in the world! A body of armed men had to be summoned to watch over the district and prevent burglars from raiding this " Arabian Nights " cave.

Excitement was still further increased by the fact that the tomb was composed of several rooms, as the explorers had ascertained on their first visit. Two great statues of the king stood at the northern extremity of the first room, as if to guard the blocked-up door on the plaster-work of which could be seen the impression of many seals. What was there behind this wall? According to all probability the mortuary vault of the King. But in what condition would it be found? The entrance door had revealed undoubted evidence of the breaking in of thieves, who had come there soon after Tutankhamon's burial, with the intention of plundering him; but it was no less obvious that they had been interrupted in the middle of their sinister work and that the inspectors of the necropolis had endeavoured to set all in order, as well as they could, before they re-sealed the entrance door. In spite of these depredations, it was hoped to find the catafalque and the sarcophagus in a perfect state of preservation; and it was in that very hope that lay the great novelty of this discovery, since, so far, all the tombs

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which had been found had been pillaged by thieves who had left behind only lamentably mutilated remnants

Lord Carnavon had at once obtained the liberal collaboration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, which put at his disposal the clever investigator, Arthur Mace, and the excellent photographer of the Museum, Harry Burton. At the same time, Mr. Lucas, the learned Director of the Chemistry Department of the Egyptian Government, contributed the fruit of his long experience. If the discovery of this tomb had taken place twenty years ago, before the science of excavation had reached its present development, a great number of the objects would have been destroyed by the simple fact of their being touched by the hands which



FIG. 156.

(After Th. Van Dyck.)

THE ROYAL PARTY.

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FIG. 157. (After Jean Capart.) TOMBS OF RAMSES VI AND TUTANKHAMON.

transported them. Two whole months were necessary to empty the first room only and to put the six hundred objects it contained into the tomb of Sethi II, which had become a laboratory.

On a first visit to the Nile Valley, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Belgium had been greatly impressed by the grandeur of the monuments of ancient Egyptian civilization. She therefore realized at once the importance of the find. It was no longer the flaring up of a few rare sparks hidden under the ashes; it was a mighty flame, shining its brightest. It was no longer a few patches of

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

faded colours reappearing here and there from under the plaster-work; it was a beautiful fresco restored to us in all its freshness. Everybody will understand our Sovereign's wish to share in the emotion of such a moment.

The excavators were about to penetrate into that part of Tutankhamon's tomb which is the deepest and probably the richest as well. The rough wall was pierced through on the 18th of February, 1923. That very evening, after dinner, I had the good fortune to gather from Lord Carnarvon's own lips and from those of Pierre Lacau, Director of the Antiquities Department, the impression made upon them by their entrance into the mortuary vault. The following Sunday had been chosen by the Queen and her son Prince Leopold for visiting the tomb. Lord Carnarvon's royal guests left the Winter



FIG. 158. (After Th. Van Dyck.) THE ENTRANCE TO THE TOMB.

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FIG. 159.

(After Polinet.)

RECEPTION OF H. M. THE QUEEN.

Palace Hotel at the beginning of the afternoon (Fig. 156); they crossed the Nile and were soon motoring to the Valley of the Kings

The tomb of Ramses VI at the foot of which, as I have said before, opens that of Tutankhamon, is at a short distance from the entrance gate of the royal necropolis. It is hollowed out in a sort of rocky buttress at the top of which is built the little house which serves as a shelter for the guards of the Antiquities Department (Fig. 157). The principal road, trodden by all visitors to Biban-el-Moluk from remote antiquity onwards, runs over the staircase leading to Tutankhamon's tomb. It had been necessary to go down several yards below that level and the excavators had had to build breast walls and enclosures with fragments of stone to avoid disturbing

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

the normal traffic and to protect their operations against inopportune visitors. A photo clearly shows the appearance of the tomb in February, 1923 (Fig. 158).

When the Queen arrives on the site, she is welcomed by the officials who have been invited to the ceremony. A few brief introductions take place (Fig. 159), after which Her Majesty, under the guidance of Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter, descends the famous steps and penetrates into the vault. Prince Leopold soon joins them, and while they are marvelling as much at the magnificence as at the rarity of Tutankhamon's funerary furniture, I patiently await my turn. There I stand, between the two great statues (Fig. 160), really most beautiful in spite of the strange aspect they have taken beneath



FIG. 160. (After H. Burton.) THE SHRINE WITHIN THE SEPULCHRE.

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the layer of resin with which they were coated of old. In front of me, through the wide breach and a few inches from the wall, I can see a gigantic panel, all covered with gold and inlaid with blue enamel. A text runs beneath my eyes : " The gods of the other world welcome King Tutankhamon." All hesitation vanishes. This is now really the King's tomb and, no doubt, his mummy lies concealed inside the catafalque and enclosed in its sarcophagus.

A few moments after, when the Queen and the Prince have come out of the vault, Mace, of the Metropolitan Museum, calls to me : " It is your turn now!" He guides me; he first shows me how to sit on the threshold of the room, the floor of which is at a lower level, and then how to slip between the wall and the outside of the

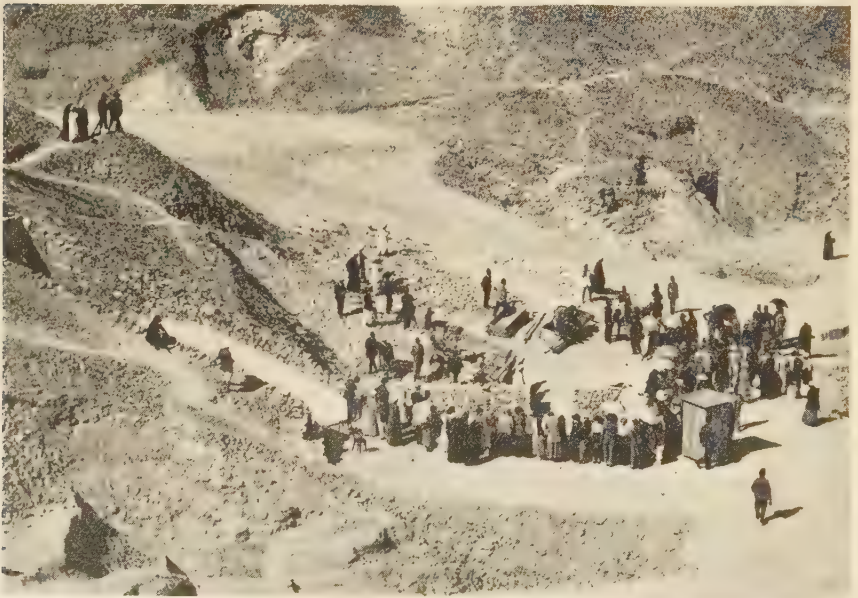


FIG. 161.

(After Polinet.)

AROUND THE TOMB.

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

catafalque which allows very little space for passing. I hurriedly look at the scenes adorning the huge doors whose bolts are still undrawn. Quite a number of oars are laid against one of the walls. An entrance is cut out in the rock, on the right. The moment I see it, I cannot help shouting and even clapping my hands! It is so incredible, it so surpasses all that the accounts of Lord Carnarvon and Pierre Lacau have allowed me to imagine! They had said. "What

is in the first room is nothing compared with the contents of the tomb." Certainly I had been prepared, but the reality by far surpassed my expectations. I kept saying to myself: for thirty-five centuries nobody has come here, no human breath has troubled the stillness of the atmosphere, everything has remained unchanged. Meanwhile, in the outer world, empires were crumbling, civilizations disappearing, emigrations were displacing the abodes of races, languages were completely dying out, and religions were losing their last adherents! In the closed up tomb, life itself was necessarily abolished, or else all these objects would have perished also and been reduced to



FIG. 162. (Phot. H.M. Queen Elizabeth.)
LORD CARNARVON AND HOWARD CARTER.

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FIG. 163.

(After Polinet.)

THE QUEEN LEAVING THE TOMB.

dust and mud. In the bustle and hurry of the funeral, things have been piled up, almost thrown one on top of the other, in unstable equilibrium. They have remained so for three thousand five hundred years, and, in a few days, Carter and his collaborators will take them up again with infinite care and bring them back to the cycle of life, suspended since the day of Tutankhamon's burial. Do these thoughts occupy my mind to the exclusion of everything else and prevent me from looking about? Far from it! Rather do I try to grasp it all in one moment. I know that there is only a short time at my disposal and that Lord Carnarvon's illustrious guests are waiting for me to come out in order to enter themselves. The privilege granted me is so great that I do not wish to seem to abuse it. Later on I shall know what there is in the small room; I shall read the inventories and be able to study at leisure the mysterious contents of all

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON



FIG. 164. (After Th. Van Dyck.) THE QUEEN RETURNING TO LUXOR.

these sealed-up chests, to linger over the detailed examination of the rigging and decorations of the various types of boats which had been placed here and there. What will never come back is that fugitive moment when everything was still intact and when we could believe, not that centuries had passed, but that, through an unheard-of prodigy, we had retraced the course of ages in order to live the life of a porter of mortuary furniture, laying in the tomb the offerings to the defunct Pharaoh.

Outside the tomb photographers, cinema-operators and the crowd flocking round the parapet (Fig. 161), remind us brutally that we are living in the XXth century A.D. It is over. The Queen, in her turn, takes a photo of Carnarvon and Carter, almost on the spot of their never-to-be-forgotten discovery (Fig. 162). Then she proceeds to her car (Fig. 163), recrosses the Nile, and goes back to Luxor (Fig. 164).

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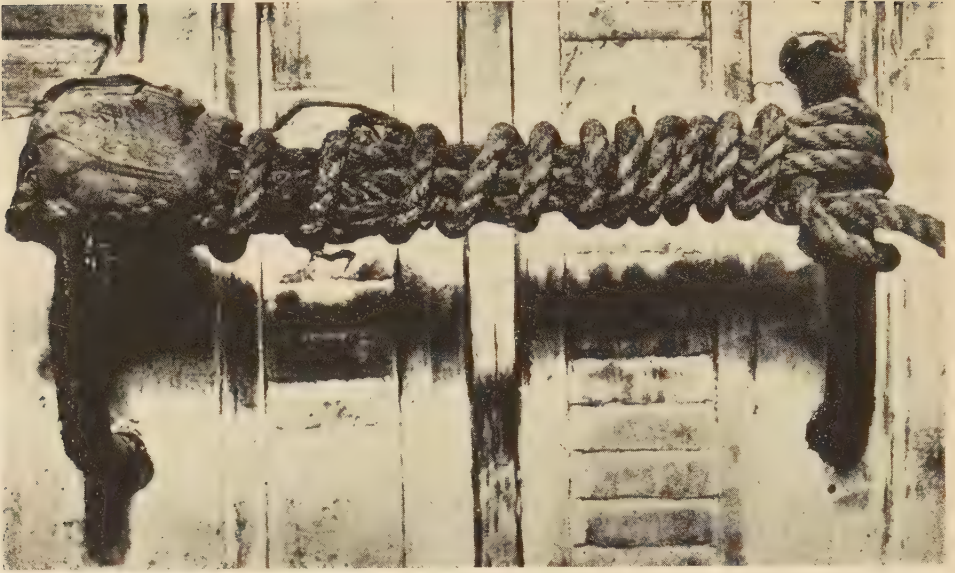


FIG. 165.

(After H. Burton.)

THE SEALED DOOR.

The Queen and the Prince had several other opportunities of visiting the Valley of the Kings during the weeks that followed. The tomb was to be closed again until the next season of excavation. On the eve of the closing day the first door of the catafalque was opened for a few moments... The eyes of all present are turned towards the central point where other doors are to be seen, all of them still closed and sealed up, hiding from us more treasures (Fig. 165). The interior is gilt all over and covered with inscriptions and representations of the divinities. The space left between the two structures, set one in the other, is literally crammed with treasures of all kinds (Fig. 166) : — curiously worked alabaſter vases, a vase with a lid surmounted by the figure of a young lion, small inlaid chests, sceptres, maces, regal insignia, etc. A big frame, whose posts and cross-pieces plainly indicate panels, stands be-

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tween the catafalques. It was used to support hangings adorned with gold roses. The lower part is now torn and covers the pieces of furniture. The top part is still hanging from the frame, and so hides the cornice of the inner tabernacle. How one does long to get over these obstacles and link up in one moment the scattered mysteries of this unique tomb !...



After the closing of the tomb, we came back to visit the principal hypogea of Biban-el-Moluk (Fig. 167). The



FIG. 166.

(After H. Burton.)

INSIDE THE CATAFALQUE.

LECTURES ON EGYPTIAN ART



FIG. 167. (After Jean Capart.)
H. M. QUEEN ELIZABETH AT
BIBAN-EL-MOLUK.

better to realize the extraordinary impression produced by the tombs of the great Pharaohs, we tried to find out the secrets of the artists who had given the measure of their talent in the decoration of these monuments.

I think I may be allowed to add that rarely has a professor delivering his explanations and comments had disciples more attentive than those whom I had then the honour of addressing. Some weeks later a prominent Belgian magistrate, attached to the International Juris-

dition of Egypt, wrote these words : " The thorough intellectual conscientiousness which has characterized the journey of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Leopold has been estimated at its proper value by their compatriots and by the Egyptian *élite* ; hence the immediate and unexpected success of the Queen Elizabeth Foundation for the development of the study of Egyptology in Belgium... "

" In the hierarchy of travel, we may distinguish journeys which entertain, those which instruct and those which

AT THE TOMB OF TUTANKHAMON

create. The visit to the banks of the Nile of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Leopold has raised up between Belgium and the Land of the Pharaohs a work of scientific solidarity the importance of which is equalled only by its opportuneness.”



SIXTH LECTURE

Golden Deeds of Egyptian Excavators.

GOLDEN DEEDS OF EGYPTIAN EXCAVATORS

GROWN-UP people, like little children, are fond of stories. But if one wishes to please them especially, one must relate adventures in which the unforeseen plays the principal role. Hence the unfading popularity of detective stories; but hence also, to a very considerable extent, the success of accounts of archæological excavations.

The researches effected in the Valley of the Nile have given birth to what one might call a complete romantic literature. It is astonishing that the subject has not yet tempted anyone and that we have no work entitled: "Golden Deeds of Egyptian Excavators." The person writing it would have to consider certain great periods the characters of which would be essentially different.

For my part, I should call the first one the period of "magical" burglary. As a matter of fact, people have devoted themselves for centuries to the hunt for treasure in a way really inconceivable to all who have not turned over the leaves of one of the manuals which organized it and claimed to direct it from village to village across the whole of Egypt. For each locality the master indicates the best hiding places and puts the seekers on their guard against the genii who defend them. In order to succeed, one must undergo purifications, burn incense, recite formulæ, and follow to the letter the prescriptions of the manual. This period is not yet definitely closed and every year precious scientific treasures are annihilated by these magician-plunderers.

As soon as the attention of learned Europe was seriously

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drawn to Egypt by Napoleon's expedition, the great museums sought to procure antiquities. For a long time their purveyors were the consuls who exploited the ancient sites, seeking for beautiful things. They found great numbers of these. Unhappily they did not bring a scientific spirit to their excavations, and it is no exaggeration to say that—involuntarily, I admit—they occasioned irreparable ravages to the monuments. Moreover, it is nearly always impossible to find out with certitude whence the objects came which they sold to the museums of Europe.

As to the modern period, one would have to make it begin about 1850. It was then that the Frenchman, Mariette Pasha, made his first excavations in Egypt. It would be unjust to reproach him for not having applied, from the very beginning, the most scrupulous methods. It must be proclaimed loudly that, if we can now mark a new contemporary period, characterized by excavations conducted in a perfect manner, we owe it to the prodigious development of Egyptian archæology which would never have taken place without the work, truly worthy of men of genius, done by the great Egyptologists who have followed in the footsteps of Mariette.

Shall I try to relate to you a few of the most sensational stories of the last two periods? Better still, shall we listen to the authors of the discoveries telling us themselves under what circumstances they were able to make these finds and communicating to us their own impressions?



The first sensational discovery, which excited the whole world was the opening, by Mariette, of the Serapeum of Memphis. We know the story of the career, really roman-

GOLDEN DEEDS OF EGYPTIAN EXCAVATORS

tic, of this little drawing professor, whose vocation awoke when he was examining a mummy-case in the Museum of Boulogne. He succeeded in having entrusted to him a mission to Egypt to search for Coptic manuscripts. While he was waiting for the necessary authorization to visit the convents, he turned his enforced leisure to account by studying first of all the necropolis of Gizeh.

“ He went from there to Sakkara, on the 27th of October, 1850, and began the exploration of the necropolis. One day, when he was going over it with his rule in his hand, striving to puzzle out the plan of the tombs, he perceived by chance a human head in limestone which stood out from the sand, the type of which reminded him of the sphinxes he had admired in the Zizinia gardens or at his friends’ in Cairo.

‘ At the same moment, ’ he said, ‘ a passage of Strabo came into my mind : “ There is moreover (at Memphis) a temple of Serapis in a place so sandy that there the winds accumulate great heaps of sand, under which we saw the sphinxes buried, some half-way up, some up to the head, whence it may be conjectured that the way towards this temple would not be without danger, if one were surprised by a gust of wind. ” Does it not seem as if Strabo wrote this sentence to help us to find, more than eighteen centuries after him, the famous temple consecrated to Serapis? As a matter of fact, no doubt was possible. This sphinx buried in the sand, the companion of fifteen others I had met with at Alexandria and at Cairo, formed most obviously part of the avenue which led to the Serapeum of Memphis. ’ He was waiting for the letter from the patriarchate, which was still delayed; he had a few days before him, just what was wanted, he thought, to follow the alley of sphinxes and reach the monument. If, as he

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hoped, the latter were lying intact under the sand, there would still be time, either to refer to the Consul-General, or to ask, directly from France, for leave to continue the excavation. ' At that moment I forgot my mission, I forgot the Patriarch, the convents, the Coptic and Syriac manuscripts, and it was thus that, on the first of November, 1850, by one of the most beautiful sunrises I have ever seen in Egypt, some thirty workmen found themselves assembled under my orders, near this sphinx which was going to effect such a complete upheaval in the conditions of my sojourn in Egypt. '”(I.)

It is unnecessary for me to describe to you the innumerable difficulties the audacious Frenchman had to overcome before discovering the Serapeum. Indeed, it was only a year later that success crowned his efforts. This is how he himself relates his first entrance into the tomb, in the night of the 12th of November, 1851.

“ Towards the end of the preceding day, the upper part of a magnificent door, made of white limestone, was visible at the bottom of the trench, along the south vertical wall. We set to work ardently. Some great fallen blocks, which had to be broken with sledge-hammers, unfortunately retarded the work, which we continued during the night. A little corner of the entrance soon became visible. I let myself slip through and a few seconds later I was inside the tomb... The trench was being cleared and the sand kept falling back into the subterranean tomb through the hole which had served me as an entry. We worked to remove it as actively as the small number of men at our disposal allowed... As regards extent, the tomb of Apis exceeded all our hopes. It is a large subterranean tomb, with its rooms, its galleries, its passages. Evidently the Apis had a common sepulchre in the necropolis of Memphis, and not, as I had sometimes

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thought, isolated vaults, hollowed out separately and enclosed in the precincts of the Serapeum. When an Apis died at Memphis, the subterranean structure was prolonged by a room and, from generation to generation, the tomb of the god became longer and longer as the mummies that were placed there became more and more numerous... The tomb is composed of a long principal gallery which is vaulted, and on to which are grafted, at right angles, smaller galleries which project on both sides. For part of the distance, the galleries have, as lateral boundaries, only the solid rock in which they are hollowed out; often also, on each side of



FIG. 168. (After Jean Capart.) GIGANTIC SARCOPHAGUS OF APIS.

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the way, great rooms open out. These rooms slope downwards from the galleries and like them are vaulted. They are not opposite to one another, but alternate. Thus constructed, the tomb of Apis is by far the greatest subterranean tomb which exists in Egypt : its galleries placed end to end, without counting the lateral rooms, are about 250 yards long." (II.)

It has been calculated that the gigantic sarcophagi (Fig. 168) weighed about 58 tons and, up to the present, no one has succeeded in explaining how they were transported into the narrow galleries in order that each one might be taken into the vault reserved for it.



The whole life of Mariette, for nearly thirty years, was full of wonderful adventures. I must limit myself to citing only one which shows us with what tremendous energy he secured for the Museum of Cairo the treasures which now excite the admiration of all the visitors to it. In 1859, at Thebes, a queen's coffin had been found, containing marvellous jewels (Fig. 169) and show weapons (Fig. 170). This is how Deveria, one of Mariette's collaborators, has related "the crisis."

"The governor of the province had caused the coffin to be opened out of curiosity or from misconceived zeal, one does not quite know which. However that may be, I should not like to find myself in the place of this official the first time Mariette meets him. The Arabs had thrown away, as usual, the linen and the bones and preserved only the things buried with the mummy ; M. Mariette received the inventory of these from his Arab clerks. The governor, for his own part, had sent the list of them to the viceroy, informing him that these objects had been sent direct to

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FIG. 169.

(After E. Vernier.)

JEWEL OF AHHOTEP.

the Khedivial Court. To let them follow this destination, was to risk their partial or total loss. When we compared the two lists, we found that they were pretty nearly agreed, but they appeared to us singularly exaggerated with regard to the number of things described and with respect to their weight in gold. Furnished with a ministerial order, conferring the right of stopping all the boats laden

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with curiosities and of trans-shipping them on to our steamer, we started yesterday morning, the 21st of March, 1859, to cruise on the Nile as high as the want of water would permit of our going. Hardly had we arrived at the limit to which the "Samanhoud" could go, than we perceived, coming towards us, the boat which carried the treasure removed from the mummy of the Pharaoh. At the end of half-an-hour, the two steamers came up with one another. After considerable parleying, accompanied by somewhat animated gestures, M. Mariette offered to fling one man into the water to blow out the brains of another, to send a third to the galleys, to have a fourth hanged, and so forth. They finally decided, in exchange for a receipt, to put on our boat the box containing the aforesaid antiquities. To our great surprise, we found in it a quantity of jewels and royal insignia, nearly all bearing the name of Ahmose, a king of the XVIIIth Dynasty, while that of the queen Aahhotep was not once mentioned; the delicacy of their execution is more remarkable than that of the few specimens of the same kind we have already met with and, if I am not mistaken, there is nearly two kilograms' weight of gold, marvellously wrought, with incrustations of hard stone and of coloured enamels. " (III.)

In spite of all the difficulties, Mariette Pasha succeeded in creating the Antiquities Department of Egypt and the Museum of Cairo which is connected with it. Only persons who have been in Egypt can have any idea of the exceptional importance of this scientific organization to which another great Frenchman, Gaston Maspero, was to give its final form. The very year of Mariette's death, in 1881, Maspero presided over a discovery which, from a certain point of view, is the most sensational which has



FIG. 170.

(After E. Brugsch.)

DAGGER OF AHMOSE.

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ever been made in the domain of archæology. This is how he has himself set forth the genesis of it.

In 1871, an Arab of Thebes had discovered a hiding place, containing royal mummies. As early as 1874 there had appeared on the antiquities market, certain objects bearing the names of Pharaohs whose tombs were unknown to the Egyptologists. Successively in 1875, 1877 and 1878, the appearance, under the same circumstances, of several valuable historical documents had confirmed M. Maspero in the opinion that the Arabs had discovered a precious hiding place. In March and April 1881, a long enquiry, patiently made of the purchasers and of European tourists had acquainted him with an important fact :

“ The chief sellers of royal antiquities were a certain Abderrassul Ahmed, his brother, Mohammed Abderrassul, of Sheikh abd el Kurna, and Mustapha Agah Ayat, the consular agent of England, Belgium and Russia, at Luxor. It was not easy for me to attack the last named ; covered as he was by the diplomatic immunity, he could escape any prosecution. After a few days' hesitation I decided to proceed energetically against the brothers Abderrassul. On the 4th of April, I sent to the chief of the Luxor police the order to arrest Abderrassul Ahmed, and I asked telegraphically to be authorized to open at once an enquiry against the chief inhabitants of the village of Sheikh abd el Kurna. Abderrassul Ahmed, seized by two gendarmes just as he was returning from an expedition in the mountain, was brought on board my boat. He denied all the misdeeds which I imputed to him on the unanimous evidence of the travellers. I accepted the offer he made me to search his house, less in the hope of finding any compromising deposits than in that of furnishing him with an opportunity of coming to a better frame of mind and of entering into terms of composition

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with us. Gentle treatment, threats, offers of money, all were useless and on the 6th of April, the order arrived to begin the inquiry officially. I sent the prisoner and one of his brothers, Hussein-Ahmed, to Qeneh, where the Mudir claimed them for the legal proceedings against them.

“ The affair was conducted briskly. The sole result of



FIG. 171. (Air phot. P. Kofler.) AMPHITHEATRE OF DÊR EL-BAHRÎ.

the examination and the discussions was to elicit a great deal of evidence favourable to the accused. The notables and the mayors of Kurna affirmed repeatedly, on oath, that Abderrassul Ahmed was the most loyal and disinterested man in the country, that he had never excavated and would never excavate, that he was incapable of appropriating to himself the smallest antiquity, with greater reason incapable of violating a royal tomb. It was remarked how Abderrassul Ahmed insisted on proclaiming

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that he was in the service of Mustapha Agha Ayat and that he lived in the house of this personage. He thought that, by professing to be the servant of a consular agent, he would benefit by the privileges attached to the diplomatic office and would become, in some sort, the protégé

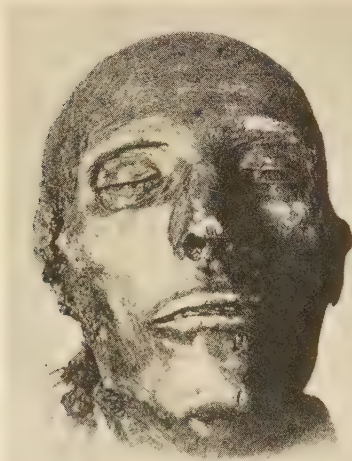


FIG. 172. (After G. Maspero.)
MUMMY OF SETHI I.

of Belgium, Russia and Great Britain. Abderrassul was set at liberty provisionally, two of his friends being security for him. He returned home about the middle of May with the certificate of immaculate honesty which the notables of Kurna had granted him. But his arrest, the two months' imprisonment he had undergone, the energy with which the inquiry had been conducted had clearly shown that Mustapha Agah was powerless to protect his most faithful associates; moreover, it was known that I intended returning to Thebes during the

winter and that I was determined to begin the matter over again. A few timid denunciations arrived at the Museum, some fresh information reached us from abroad; and, what was better still, discord broke out in the family of Abderrassul. Some thought the danger was finally over and the administration of the Museum defeated, others esteemed it would be prudent to come to terms with it and give up the secret. At the same time Abderrassul Ahmed maintained that his associates owed him compensation for the months of prison he had undergone and

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claimed half the treasure for himself alone, instead of the fifth part with which he had been satisfied until then. If they refused to concede what he demanded, he threatened to go and tell the Management of the Excavations everything. After a month of discussion and quarrelling, the elder of the brothers, Mohamed Abderrassul, seeing that betrayal on the part of his people was imminent, resolved to be beforehand with it. He went secretly to Qeneh on the 25th of June and announced to the Mudir that he knew the place so long and vainly sought for. Daud Pasha at once reported to the Minister of the Interior who transmitted the telegram to the Khedive. The Khedive, to whom I had spoken about the matter on my return from Upper Egypt,

readily acknowledged the importance of this declaration and at once asked for precise details. A second telegram arrived the following day, the terms of which allowed no doubt to remain as to the importance of the discovery. 'On verifying the place discovered at Kurna (more exactly at Dêr el-Bahri) (Fig. 171), on the 25th of June,' said Daud Pasha, 'we found it long and containing more than thirty sarcophagi and many other things, such as statuettes, marbles, etc. and the greater number of the sarcophagi are covered by the inscriptions. The images of serpents and

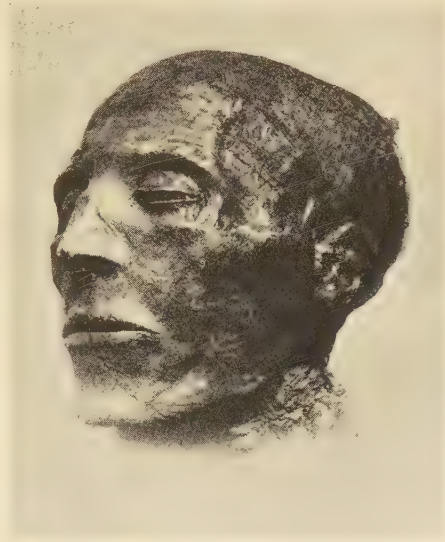


FIG. 173. (After G. Maspero.)
MUMMY OF SETHI I.

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the ornaments we see in this place prove that it is a royal place. One cannot count all the ancient specimens existing in this place without bringing them out of the subterranean dwelling.''' (IV.) And it is thus that, in the Museum of Cairo, we can contemplate, face to face, the great Pharaohs, among which Sethi I, father of Ramses II. (Figs. 172 and 173.)



When one speaks of excavations in Egypt, the public readily imagines that the work consists of disengaging the ancient monuments from the sand which covers them. This is true, in the majority of cases. But there is sand *and* sand, and he who has never seen a necropolis in the middle of the desert cannot have the least idea of the fluidity of this element, which literally flows like water. In certain places one is tempted to make fun of those who imagine they can remove tons of a sand which flees maliciously through the baskets that serve to carry it away. If I had time, I could tell you the story of an excavator who owed his safety solely to the rapidity with which the workmen drew him out of a well in which the sand was surging up from the bottom by a phenomenon analogous to that observed when the equilibrium of liquids is established in communicating vessels. But there are worse things than that. Explorers have seen their researches hindered by the water which, by infiltration, had invaded the ancient burial-grounds. Let us listen to Flinders Petrie telling us under what circumstances he discovered a marvellous series of gold amulets in the necropolis of Hawara. It was in 1889.

“ There was still water nearly waist deep remaining in the tomb; and to reach the sarcophagi it was necessary to wade cautiously among the fragments of slippery wood-

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work which lay all about under the water, and to avoid breaking one's shins on floating coffins, while skulls bobbed around on the waves. "

First he finds a recess full of funerary figures.

" At the sight of all these, the lad who worked this tomb yelled with frantic delight in the echoing chamber, dancing about in the water, and snapping his fingers, beside himself with joy...

" Going down Horuta's tomb always reminded me of the descent of Ishtar into Hades; first I left my coat at the top, then took off my hat last thing before descending, then at the bottom of the shaft I had to leave my trousers and boots and, last of all, I often had to part finally with my shirt, and get under the water to reach the work...

" The sarcophagus now remained to be opened. The lid was too enormous for us to raise it entire, weighing as it did about seven tons. It was accessible only on one side, the rest being blocked by rock or massive masonry and only the top of its two feet of thickness was above the water. It was needful therefore to cut it across... The men worked at it in relays night and day, and it was for six weeks that their picks echoed in that tomb every hour of the twenty-four. Then one half of the lid was lifted, and I spent over six hours under the water, with generally only my head out, trying to loosen and extract the coffin...

" The greater part of the coffin could only be reached by the feet. In this way I cleared out much of the sand packing, by scraping with my feet and lifting out the sand very quietly, for the least current in the water carried it all down again. Finally (with the help of iron bolts and ropes), up the coffin came inch by inch and at last rose, a vast brown mass out of the water, ' like a buffalo, ' as the Arabs said... As I cut away the pitch and outer

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bandages of the mummy, one after another of the gold amulets came in sight... These were the most gorgeous of all such amulets... ” (V.)

Very typical of the excavator's life is the life Sir Flinders Petrie has been leading in Egypt for more than forty years with an enthusiasm ever fresh, and remarkable power of endurance. He has had an extraordinary influence upon the younger school. Most of the men whose adventures we are now going to relate made their first campaign under his leadership.



With your permission we will pass straight on to the year 1900. “ Do you think there is still much to be found in Egypt? ” is a question often asked of Egyptologists by those who take an interest in the excavations. I asked it myself of Maspero a few years before his death and I remember my astonishment at receiving the reply :

“ Most certainly; Egypt is barely scratched over. ” I confess I thought it was said just to make me open my eyes. But when we pass in review all the sensational discoveries made since 1900, we cannot help thinking that Maspero was right.

Notice that most of the discoveries are due rather to chance than to systematic researches. More remarkable still, some of the most sensational finds have been made in monuments which had already been thoroughly searched, in which one could certainly believe nothing had been forgotten.

In the amphitheatre of Dêr el-Bahri there is a royal tomb known by the name of Bab el-Hosan - which means “ the tomb of the horse. ” The origin of the nickname is as follows. In 1901 Howard Carter wrote :

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FIG. 174.

(After H. Carter.)

BAB EL-HOSAN.

“ Some two years ago, I obtained the knowledge of the existence of this tomb when riding home after some rain had fallen, for, on nearing my house, the ground gave way under the horse’s legs, bringing both of us down. Afterwards, on looking into the small hole there formed,

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I saw traces of stone-work, from which I concluded that there must be something and most probably a tomb. I commenced excavating on the 20th of January 1900, in order to find out what really was there and, in a short time, I was able to trace the three sides of the stone-work, the fourth side, to the east, being open. From this state of the east end, I concluded that, if it was a tomb, the entrance would be below the western end, so that I at once set the men to work there...

“ After working down some 17 yards, on the 10th of March I found the door, which had its original mud-brick sealings intact (Fig. 174). ” (VI.)

They discovered a statue there, some remains of funerary furniture, but no sepulchre, properly so-called, and some think that the Bab el-Hosan has not yet delivered up all its secrets.



It was the same year that Barsanti found the enormous pyramid in construction at Zauiet el Aryan, one of the most impressive ruins one can see in Egypt.

“ On the 15th of May, ” wrote Barsanti, “ discouraged by the negative result of the excavations I had just executed in the pyramid of Zauiet el Aryan, I was returning to the pyramids of Gizeh in company with the Reis Ibrahim Fayed, but instead of following the route which leads to the edge of the desert, we were going along the upper plateau. When we were about a kilometre and a half to the north of the pyramid of Zauiet, the Reis drew my attention to the fact that upon the ground were everywhere scattered splinters of granite. I at once thought that they indicated the site of a work-yard where they had finished hewing the blocks and the pieces of furniture destined for some great tomb, and that this tomb must be hidden in

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the neighbourhood. On examining the spot more attentively, I noticed, very close to the work-shop a regular bed of powdered granite, like that which is used to polish the hard stones employed in the structure. Greatly



FIG. 175.

(After Jean Capart.)

TOMB OF KING NEFER-KA.

struck by these indications, I climbed a neighbouring hill in order to view more conveniently the site as a whole, and at once I recognized, to the south of the hill, the remains of an enormous rectangular structure, the walls of which were barely above the level of the surrounding ground... ” (VII.)

Maspero, commenting on Barsanti's accounts of his

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excavations, conveys very well the extraordinary impression which seizes upon the visitors (Fig. 175).

“ The immensity of the work undertaken by the Egyptians will not reveal itself to them just at first; it is only at the bottom of the staircase, when they place their foot upon the granite flag-stones, that it will flash upon them. Not that each detail examined separately offers anything very remarkable and which is out of the usual course of things, but the impression is one of those which one never forgets. The hewing and the richness of the materials, the perfection of the cutting and of the joints, the incomparable finish of the granite trough; then, on the other hand, the boldness of the lines and the height of the walls—all unite to compose a whole unique up to the present. It is as if one had received a shock and nowhere does the power of the old Egyptian architects reveal itself with such sudden force. ” (VIII.)

What shall we say of George Legrain's discovery and exploration of the famous hiding place of Karnak which, for three years, from 1903 to 1905, gave up objects by thousands and pretty nearly doubled the series of statues of the first rank possessed by the Museum of Cairo. I will content myself with showing the wonderful Ramses II presenting an offering (Fig. 176).

At Karnak the Antiquities Department made it a rule not to excavate and contented itself with clearing and consolidating the monuments. Wishing to repair the foundations of a wall in the hypostyle hall, Legrain noticed that the ground beneath the neighbouring court concealed treasures. This is how Maspero describes the aspect of the strange excavating-yard which was in activity for three years.

“ Meanwhile the rumour spread that we were doing



FIG. 176.

(After G. Legrain.)

RAMSES II.

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wonders at Karnak, and, assisted by the Oriental imagination, the monuments were not emerging by tens or even by hundreds, but by thousands, and they were of a colossal size; the villagers had even weighed them and reckoned the value in current coin of the masses of gold of which M. Legrain predicted the imminent arrival. Tourists, who are numerous at Luxor in the winter months, came in crowds every day to the environs of the pylon, and if they were quiet and orderly were willingly admitted to the spectacle. Fishing for statues actually went on under their eyes. The trench dug in the north-west corner of the courtyard against the wall of the Hypostyle Hall was dry in parts, and in others scattered over with pools. The work was carried on in the largest of them, which was the last on the south side. Every morning twenty men, using old petroleum cans for pails, drew off the three or four feet of muddy water which filled it and stored it in a reservoir situated a little above, and separated from the large pool by a thin partition of earth. When only mud of a certain consistency was left, they attacked it with the pickaxe, stopping now and then to feel gently with their feet till resistance under their heels seemed to point to the existence of a block. Then they dropped the pickaxe and used their hands, for fear that an awkward blow of the instrument might cause irreparable damage. When the contour and dimensions of the object were in some degree defined, they raised it as well as they could by means of wooden levers, and tried to drag it to the edge by a series of slow jolts. If this had no effect, or the weight was too great, they wound a rope several times round it, and harnessing themselves to its end, three or four of them pulled with caution. That was the particular moment of the operation which the tourists, warned by their dragomans, impatiently awaited. The

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mud was tenacious, the rope tended to slip and escape, the bottom of the pool offered insufficient support. But very often, after a long inertia, the piece suddenly and most unexpectedly detached itself from the mud, and the



FIG. 177.

(After L. Borchardt.)

JEWELLERY OF BASTA.

workmen, losing their balance, fell one over the other, splashing the people standing round. The tourists burst into laughter and most of them ran away. A few, however, remained in order to witness the recognition of the statue. The body and face were washed, sponged, wiped, brushed, and such vigorous treatment was generally quickly successful. In less than five minutes the features of the face appeared, the inscriptions became legible, details of costume or style completed the information furnished by the inscriptions, and we knew if the fresh arrival was the

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high-priest Ramses-nakhuitu of the XXth Dynasty or the lord Anakhui of the XIIIth. In the evening, before leaving the place, the partition was opened, and the water drawn out of the pool in the morning was sent back. The liquid spread in the twinkling of an eye, and protected the spot against night attacks more effectually and at less expense than a picket of sentries." (IX.)



We have now to turn our attention to a discovery made by an ass. It was in 1905.

"A donkey laden with its fellah was trotting by the ruins of Tukh el Garmus. It stumbled against a big vase buried in the dust and with the blow broke its paunch. A few pieces of gold flung out of the debris started rolling joyously in the sun. The fellah, perceiving them, blessed Allah without delay, and got down. The ass shook its ears, stretched out its neck, sniffed; then, smelling nothing to eat in the neighbourhood, it fell half asleep, its eyes dimmed with a distant vision of fresh water, green clover, and chopped straw. The fellah, however, did not waste his time in useless reveries, but he dug up, by handfuls, wonderful things; chased dishes and vases, chafing-dishes, censers, necklaces and bracelets, gold and silver coins,—a whole treasure. He rapidly calculated that, at the rate at which the tourists buy antiquities, he had more than five thousand dollars' worth there and he resolved to adjudge all the profit to himself alone. He distributed the objects about his person, in those mysterious pockets concealed in the folds of the peasants' cloaks and spurring his beast, the two took the road to the village with an indifferent mien. The field of the ruins seemed to be deserted, but the most desolate by-places in Egypt are

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unceasingly haunted by ferreting eyes which nothing escapes. When our man returned home, his left neighbour already knew about the find, his right neighbour was not ignorant of it, and both of them claimed their share of the hoard. A quarrel ensued, the matter was noised abroad; our local inspector, Mohammed Effendi Chaban, informed by the ghafr of the place, carried off half the jewels, the chief inspector of the province, Mr. Carter, seized the rest; and that is how a donkey's kick and the quarrel of three fellahs enriched our museum with priceless jewellery." (X.)

The same year Carter was also lucky enough to get



FIG. 178.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

TOMB OF THE FATHER AND MOTHER-IN-LAW OF AMENHOTEP III.

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possession of another treasure brought to light by the Arabs who were removing from the ruins of Baſta what is called *sebakb*, that is to say the earth containing organic remains, which is gladly used as manure in the fields. It was in the Baſta find that was discovered a delightful silver vase the handle of which is a golden kid (Fig. 177).



In 1902, Theodore Davis of Newport, Rhode Island, had obtained permission to excavate in the Valley of the Kings, at Thebes. This time it was no longer a question of proceeding haphazard, but, on the contrary, of thoroughly clearing, even in places where it might seem at first sight that there could be nothing whatever. All that Davis asked was to have the privilege of being the first to penetrate into any tomb that they might happen to discover. It must be confessed that this is an impression which pays an excavator for all his pains and all his sacrifices. This is how Davis has related his entrance in 1905, in company with Maspero and Weigall, into the sepulchre of the father and mother of the great queen Tiye (Figs. 178 and 179).

“ We found that the opening which the robber had made was too high and too small to allow of Monsieur Maspero getting through without injury. Though we had nothing but our bare hands, we managed to take down the upper layer of stones, and then Monsieur Maspero and I put our heads and candles into the chamber, which enabled us to get a glimpse of shining gold covering some kind of furniture, though we could not identify it. This stimulated us to make the entry without further enlarging the opening. I managed to get over the wall and found myself in the sepulchral

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FIG. 179.

(After J. E. Quibell.)

MUMMY OF IOUIYA.

chamber. With considerable difficulty we helped Monsieur Maspero safely to scale the obstruction, and then Mr. Weigall made his entry. The chamber was as dark as dark could be and extremely hot. Our first quest was the name of the owner of the tomb, as to which we had not

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FIG. 180.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

JEWEL CASE.

the slightest knowledge or suspicion. We held up our candles, but they gave so little light and so dazzled our eyes that we could see nothing except the glitter of gold. In a moment or two, however, I made out a very large wooden coffin, known as a funeral sled, which was used to contain all the coffins of the dead person and his mummy, and to convey them to his tomb. It was about six feet high and eight feet long, made of wood covered with bitumen, which was as bright as the day it was put on. Around the upper part of the coffin was a stripe of gold-foil, about six inches wide, covered with hieroglyphs.



FIG. 181.

(After J. E. Quibell.)

ALABASTER VASES



FIG. 182.

(After Th. M. Davis.)

BED OF QUEEN TIYE'S PARENTS.

GOLDEN DEEDS OF EGYPTIAN EXCAVATORS

On calling Monsieur Maspero's attention to it, he immediately handed me his candle, which, together with my own, I held before my eyes, close to the inscriptions, so that he could read them. In an instant he said : ' Iouiya.' Naturally excited by the announcement, and blinded by the glare of the candles, I involuntarily advanced them very near the coffin; whereupon Monsieur Maspero cried out : ' Be careful!' and pulled my hands back. In a moment we realized that, had my candles touched the bitumen, which I came dangerously near doing, the coffin would have been in a blaze. As the entire contents of the tomb were inflammable, and directly opposite the coffin was a corridor leading to the open air and making a draught, we undoubt-



FIG. 183. (After Th. M. Davis.) ARMCHAIR OF QUEEN TIYI'S PARENTS.

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FIG. 184. (After a phot. Metropolitan Museum, N.Y.)
PECTORAL OF SESOSTRIS I.

edly should have lost our lives, as the only escape was by the corridor, which would have necessitated climbing over the stone wall barring the doorway. This would have retard-

ed our exit for at least ten minutes.

"As soon as we realized the danger we had escaped, we made our way out of the chamber and, seating ourselves in the corridor, sent for workmen, who took down the door blocking the doorway. Then the electricians brought down the wires with bulbs attached, and we made our second entry into the chamber, each of us furnished with electric lights which we held over our heads, and we saw that every foot of the chamber was filled with objects brilliant with gold" (Figs. 180, 181, 182, 183). (XI.)

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There now follow three adventures which have a common feature : the explorers found themselves in the presence of a tomb pillaged in olden times, in which, at the most, one could only expect to pick up a few mutilated fragments of funerary furniture. However, as they wished to draw an exact plan of it, they did not leave one little corner which they did not clean out thoroughly. At Illahun, in 1914,

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Flinders Petrie's assistants are busy in this way in a tomb of the XIIth Dynasty. Brunton thus describes what happened.

" The work of clearance lasted till the afternoon of the 10th of February, when the whole tomb was free with the exception of the recess in the west wall of the antechamber. This was filled to within ten inches of its roof with a very compact dried mud, quite distinct from the filling of the rest of the tomb... When the antechamber was emptied and the recess was first seen, I was interested to notice how the surface of the mud-filling had dried and cracked into little ' saucers. ' As there was nothing to indicate that the recess had ever been walled up, it was evident that the bottom of the tomb had once been filled with mud to this depth, and that it had been removed subsequently, except from the recess... About 4.30 p.m., when I was some distance away north of the pyramid, I received a message that some gold beads were discovered in the mud, and I hurried to the spot. " (XII.)

Brunton soon perceived that the mass of mud was full of precious objects and for many days he was occupied in disengaging them carefully.

" The recess was so low that I could not even kneel in it, and had as a rule, to work lying flat and resting on my elbows. Of course, the continued succession of finds, day after day, was amazing and utterly unexpected. The whole of the clearing, except in certain areas where the mud contained no remains whatever, was done with a small penknife; or with a pin when there was a chance of finding small beads in position. " (XIII.)

In this way were found the incomparable jewels of which the Metropolitan Museum of New York has succeeded in becoming the owner (Fig. 184).

The admirable little models which were divided between Cairo and New York were discovered under almost the

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FIG. 185.

(After a phot. Metropolitan Museum, New York.)

MODEL OF A CARPENTER'S WORKSHOP.

same circumstances. Winlock has related in a very amusing manner how the last days of an excavation campaign which had given hardly any results brought the most splendid reward for the disinterested method with which the work had been carried on.

“Wednesday, March 17th, 1922, was the beginning of what we had decided would be our last week's work on the site. In six more days we hoped to get the passages cleared enough to make a plan and then move to the temple site, which was almost ready...

“It was along toward sunset on that Wednesday that Mr. Burton came down from the mountain top where he

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had been photographing, to dismiss the workmen for the night. They had cleared out a good deal of fallen stone from the corridor and when he went into the main entrance he found the air electric with suppressed excitement. One of the men clearing away rubbish had noticed that the chips of stone trickled away from his hoe into a crack in the rock. He and the head-man of his gang scraped away more of the chips with their hands and still more went sliding down into darkness. They had just decided that there must be some large opening behind the crack, when Mr. Burton came along and struck a match to light up the darkness in the fissure



FIG. 186.

(After a phot. Metropolitan Museum, New York.)
MODEL OF A WEAVING COURTYARD.

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“ A scribbled note which he sent down to the house found the other members of the expedition just coming in from the day's work elsewhere and we all went up to the cliffs, sceptically it must be confessed, but bringing the electric torches which Burton had written for. The sun had set and as we filed into the gloomy corridor our scepticism seemed confirmed. There was nothing for us to see but a ragged hole in the rock between the floor and one side of the passage, but when one by one we lay flat on the ground and shot a beam of light into that



FIG. 187.

(After a phot. Metropolitan Museum, New York.)
MODEL OF A SAILING BOAT.

GOLDEN DEEDS OF EGYPTIAN EXCAVATORS



FIG. 188.

(After a phot. Metropolitan Museum, New York.)
MODEL OF THE FISHERMEN.

crack one of the most startling sights it is ever a digger's luck to see flashed before us.

"At first we hardly realized what we were looking into. It was getting late; we were so surprised; excitement was so quick to spread among us that the exact nature of the place was hard to judge. This much, however, was certain. We had found a small, totally untouched chamber crammed with myriads of little brightly-painted statuettes of men and animals and models of boats (Figs. 185-188)." (XIV.)

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The following year the same good luck led the excavators of the Metropolitan Museum to take up again the

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examination of the temple of the XIth Dynasty at Dêr el-Bahri. What could one hope to get from it after the researches of Naville and of Hall, carried on for several years? By dint of reasoning about the plan of the chapels and the tombs of princesses, it seemed to the Americans that "something was wrong." Again it is Winlock who will tell us how they discovered two tombs intact.

"Since Naville's day a layer of rain-washed mud had covered the place where all our hopes were centered, and a little scratching showed that under the mud there was an ancient pavement which he had found. We had the five foremen of our working gangs draw lots to see which three of them should send men over to clear the mud away, and when we had shown them what to do, we left them. Another of the interminable disappointments of a digger's life was more than we could stand.

"This time, though, there was to be no disappointment. When we went back to the work, the men were brushing the last baskets of dirt away from a practically unbroken ancient pavement and in that pavement, just behind the foundations of the shrine of Aashait, there was an absolutely plain, tell-tale sinking of the paving slabs outlining the mouth of a pit, and another, only a little less obvious, could be seen behind the northern shrine. There was no doubt that our two pits were there, and the pavement was a guarantee that no one had been in them in modern times." (XV.)



Finally, you will certainly expect me to talk to you about the excavations of Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter at Thebes. Their discovery was the crown of long and persevering researches. Doubtless no one knew as Carter did all the nooks and corners of the necropolis.

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If one is inclined to believe that it had no more secrets for him, it would suffice to borrow from his book on the Tomb of Tutankhamon the page in which he relates an adventure which happened to him in 1916, while he was spending at Thebes a short leave from the front of the Suez Canal.

“ News came into the village one afternoon that a find had been made in a lonely and unfrequented region on the western side of the mountain above the Valley of the Kings. Immediately a rival party of diggers armed themselves and made their way to the spot, and in the lively engagement that ensued the original party were beaten and driven off, vowing vengeance.

“ To avert further trouble the notables of the village came to me and asked me to take action. It was already late in the afternoon, so I hastily collected the few of my workmen who had escaped the Army Labour Levies, and with the necessary materials set out for the scene of action, an expedition involving a climb of more than 1800 feet over the Kurna hills by moonlight. It was midnight when we arrived on the scene (Fig. 144), and the guide pointed out to me the end of a rope which dangled sheer down the face of a cliff. Listening, we could hear the robbers actually at work, so I first severed their rope, thereby cutting off their means of escape, and then, making secure a good stout rope of my own, I lowered myself down the cliff. Shinning down a rope at midnight, into a nestful of industrious tomb-robbers, is a pastime which at least does not lack excitement. There were eight at work, and when I reached the bottom, there was an awkward moment or two. I gave them the alternative of clearing out by means of my rope, or else of staying where they were without a rope at all, and eventually they saw reason and departed. The rest of the

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night I spent on the spot, and, as soon as it was light enough, climbed down into the tomb again to make a thorough investigation. „ (XVI.)

It was a tomb prepared for Queen Hatshepsut.

I have already told you how, after researches lasting for seven years, in November, 1922, Howard Carter saw the door of the tomb of Tutankhamon appear beneath the pickaxe.



If we count only from 1900, what an uninterrupted succession of wonderful discoveries! And how the methodical organization of the researches has afforded richer fruits than all the previous attempts! Do you still think that Egypt is exhausted? On the contrary, you will consider that she still reserves extraordinary surprises for us.

In a work consecrated to the latest geographical discoveries I recently read this title : “ End of Discovery. ” In a certain sense, it is true. There are no more “ white spots ” on the map. Soon those who are possessed by the spirit of adventure will no longer know where to look for something new. I should like to say to them that, if our modern world is almost without mystery, it is not so when we turn our eyes towards the past. In the exploration of the history of human civilization there remain many “ white spots ” to be filled. As the “ Time-Machine ” is, as yet, only an invention of the novelist, there is but one means of filling up the gaps : the attentive and scientific study of the documents which the excavators force from the soil in the countries of ancient civilization and, above all, from the ruins of the temples and burial-grounds of Egypt.

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XVI. (p. 288). Howard CARTER & A. C. MACE, *The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen*, Vol. I. London, Cassel, 1923, pp. 79-80.

